

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Another top-ranked team falls as Stephen F. Austin stuns Duke in overtime

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Airmen take care of their own on Thanksgiving at Kapaun Air Station

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'FROGMAN AGAINST FROGMAN'



War crimes case against Navy SEAL sparks debate among elite force

BY JULIE WATSON
Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — The war crimes case against a Navy SEAL not only cost the Navy secretary his job. It dragged an elite military force known for quiet professionalism into a political firestorm and drove a wedge through the special operations community.

Regardless of their position on the allegations against Chief Petty Officer Edward Gallagher, most SEALs agree that the force has suffered from the attention surrounding the case that led President Donald Trump to restore Gallagher's rank.

"It's incredibly divisive and polarizing within our own community," one SEAL said. "In some ways, it's pitting frogman

against frogman, and it's really hard to know what to do. We're not well-equipped to deal with so much public exposure and political interference."

The SEAL, who still serves in the military, spoke on condition of anonymity, citing fear that his comments could harm his career.

SEE FROGMAN ON PAGE 6

Members assigned to Naval Special Warfare Group 2 conduct military dive operations off the East Coast of the United States in September.

JAYME PASTORIC
U.S. Navy

Kim Jong Un advances nuclear threat to US as Trump talks stall

BY JON HERSKOVITZ
Bloomberg News

It's been about two years since Kim Jong Un launched a missile capable of hitting the entire U.S., declared his nuclear weapons program "complete" and halted all ICBM tests.

In that time, the North Korean

leader has also become an even bigger threat to America.

Kim's testing freeze ushered in unprecedented diplomacy with U.S. President Donald Trump, leading to historic meetings in Singapore, Vietnam and the demilitarized zone separating the

two Koreas. But at the same time, Kim has been busy churning out fissile material for bombs and developing new missile technology that could make the next big launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile even more concerning to Pentagon military planners.

A series of shorter-range mis-

sile launches in recent months have improved North Korea's ability to make solid-fuel ballistic missiles that are easier to move, hide and fire than many of its liquid-fuel versions. That makes it more likely he's on course toward developing an ICBM that uses solid-propellant technology, potentially giving the U.S. less

warning of an imminent strike anywhere from California to New York.

Trump has brushed off North Korea's missile tests, which Japan and others say violate United Nations Security Council resolutions, signaling to Kim that he can continue developing

SEE THREAT ON PAGE 5

MILITARY

A taste of home

Airmen plan Thanksgiving feast at Kapauna

BY BRIAN FERGUSON
Stars and Stripes

KAIERSLAUTERN, Germany — Two airmen at Kapauna Air Station in Germany have an ambitious plan for Thanksgiving: They're providing many of the 351 service members who live in the base dorms with home-cooked meals.

"I know how hard it can be," said Tech. Sgt. Rosario Warren, who with Tech. Sgt. Christopher McLeroy came up with the idea to organize a lunch. "I am really close to family too ... It's hard being away from family during this time."

The pair had the idea to host the meal two months ago, long before they found out that the dining facility at Kapauna would be closed for the holiday, said the sergeants, both with the 86th Civil Engineer Squadron at Ramstein.

As word got around, families on base volunteered to bring side dishes, and the USO is donating drinks and serving supplies for the celebration.

The dinner will be held in one of the dorms on base and will have all the trappings of a state-side Thanksgiving, the two sergeants said.



BRIAN FERGUSON/Stars and Stripes

Tech. Sgt. Christopher McLeroy, left, and Tech. Sgt. Rosario Warren are the organizers of a Thanksgiving day lunch for dormitory residents and their guests on Kapauna Air Station, Germany.

All service members who live in dorms at Kapauna are invited to attend with their friends, they said.

"We want to have that atmosphere, that environment for them — the smell of the food and football going," Warren said.

McLeroy is preparing four smoked turkeys and one fried turkey, while a military spouse is preparing another turkey.

"All the help we have gotten for this has been amazing," Warren said. "Leadership, spouses, the USO, our spouses — it's been great."

Warren and McLeroy said their decision to host a Thanksgiving dinner at Kapauna had nothing to

do with the base dining facility being closed.

The decision to close the DFAC at Kapauna on Thanksgiving was made "as there are only a few airmen" at the base, Kilian Blumenlein, a spokesman for the 86th Airlift Wing at Ramstein, said in an email.

Buses will be available to shuttle airmen from Kapauna to the Ramstein dining facility.

Wing leadership will serve the airmen at Ramstein, which houses thousands more people than Kapauna.

"It is easier to have that done in one location only," Blumenlein said.

Kapauna's DFAC has not provided

ed a Thanksgiving or December holiday meal since at least 2010, said Sandra Archer, an 86th Airlift Wing spokeswoman.

If there are any leftovers at the Kapauna event, they will be offered to security guards and other people working on the base during Thanksgiving.

There's no need to RSVP for the feast, which starts at noon.

"My kids are looking forward to it; my wife is looking forward to it — she is cooking right now," McLeroy said a little after noon on Wednesday. "It's gonna be good."

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Army called in after a Texas pawnshop gets live round

BY RYAN SCOTT

*The (Greenville, Texas)
Herald Banner*

Army personnel from Fort Hood, Texas, were called in to Commerce, Texas, to dispose of a live mortar round that was innocuously taken in to the B6UP Pawn & Gun store for appraisal Monday.

Commerce Director of Public Safety Chris Bassham said Monday that a patron brought the mortar round into the store earlier in the day without knowing what it was. He said that a bomb squad was called in to examine the device, which was determined to be live.

Bassham said that a call was then made to the Army to properly dispose of the ordnance. Around 10:15 p.m., Army personnel left the scene to detonate the bomb on city-owned property near the former Commerce Fire substation.

The mortar was safely detonated inside a containment device shortly after 11 p.m. Reports came in that the loud boom could be heard 8 miles away.

A small crater was visible at the back end of the property Tuesday morning.

Several people on social media questioned the location of the detonation, which is less than half a mile from several residences.

A request for comment on that decision had not been returned as of Tuesday morning.

MILITARY

Sailors urge returning ranks to uniform covers

By CAITLIN M. KENNEY

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Navy's personnel leadership is looking at putting rank insignias back on the working uniform cover after receiving "an earful of feedback" from sailors to make a change.

The issue was raised during a Facebook live event Tuesday with Vice Adm. John Nowell, the chief of naval personnel, and Fleet Master Chief Wes Koshofer for Manpower, Personnel, Training and Education.

The Navy currently has only the anchor, Constitution and eagle, or "ACE" emblem, on its green Navy working uniform eight-point covers, also known as utility caps. The sailor's rank insignia on the uniform is only on the chest.

The issue was raised at the event, submitted by a sailor and read aloud, saying sailors are "uncomfortable staring at a female's chest to see her rank."

The rank insignia "is hard to identify even from just a few feet away" on the chest of the Navy working uniform Type IIIIs.

"Why can't we go back to ranks on eight-point covers or somewhere different on the uniform blouse?" they asked.

The ranks were removed from the covers to be more in line with the Marine

Corps, which has its eagle, globe and anchor emblem on its caps, as well as to save money for sailors, Koshofer said.

"Since we've done that, we have gotten an earful of feedback. One of the issues, visibility of the rank insignia on the chest."

"And the fact that female sailors ... have communicated they are uncomfortable with that," he said.

Koshofer said the Navy would consider the feedback in the Navy's uniform process.

Nowell has also been testing insignia options with his office staff.

"We've looked at collar devices and other ways to either improve the visibility or try another thing."

Fleet Master Chief Wes Koshofer

Koshofer said of the testing.

The Navy is not ready to go back to having ranks on the covers, Koshofer said, but he assured sailors they were working on the issue.

"We're just going to go to work on that



MIKE MILLER/U.S. Navy

Senior Chief Air Traffic Controller Jacqueline Williams, right, a recruit division commander, wears her working uniform cover as she performs a uniform inspection on an officer candidate in 2017. The Navy is considering changes to where the rank insignia is located.

problem. It's going to take us a little bit. We don't want to knee-jerk back the other direction so quickly," he said. "But we'll

solve that, and your input will be important to that."

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Military: Marine who died in Iraq killed by enemy fire

By CAITLIN M. KENNEY

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A Marine Raider who died in Iraq in August was killed by enemy fire, not by friendly fire, the counter-Islamic State mission confirmed Tuesday.

Gunnery Sgt. Scott A. Koppenhafer was killed Aug. 10 by enemy fire during combat operations against ISIS near Qainoos Island in Iraq, according to a statement Tuesday by Operation Inherent Resolve.

The operation was supporting Iraqi Security Forces, according to a Pentagon press release sent out around the time of Koppenhafer's death. A U.S. service member and two members of the Mosul SWAT were wounded by enemy fire, Operation Inherent Resolve said.

"There is no evidence that suggests Iraqi Partner Forces engaged U.S. or Coalition forces on this operation. The deaths and



Koppenhafer

injuries were incurred in the line of duty," according to the Operation Inherent Resolve statement.

The Defense Department initially announced that Koppenhafer was killed by "enemy small arms fire." However, an updated release stated he died "after suffering fatal wounds" and that the incident was under investigation.

Two defense officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said at the time the investigation was looking into the possibility that Koppenhafer had been accidentally struck by Iraqi or American fire.

Koppenhafer spent the last decade serving in the elite Marine Corps Special Operations Command after he completed the grueling Marine Raider training in 2009, according to the Corps. He was a veteran of three combat deployments as a Raider, serving as a commando in Iraq and Afghanistan.

At the time of his death, Koppenhafer was assigned to the 2nd Marine Raider Battalion at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina.

Stars and Stripes staff writer Corey Dickstein contributed to this story. kenney.caitlin@stripes.com

German leader says it's essential to preserve NATO

Associated Press

BERLIN — NATO is at least as essential today as it was during the Cold War, Chancellor Angela Merkel said Wednesday, renewing a pledge to keep raising Germany's defense spending and arguing that it is important to keep Turkey in the alliance.

Merkel told the German parliament before a NATO summit in London next week that "Europe cannot defend itself alone at the moment; we rely on this trans-Atlantic alliance."

"The preservation of NATO is in our very own interest today, more strongly than during the Cold War — or at least as strongly as during the Cold War," she said.

French President Emmanuel Macron's recent public criticism of NATO — notably a perceived lack of U.S. leadership, concerns about Turkey since it invaded northern Syria without warning its allies, and the need for Europe to take on more security responsibilities — has shaken the alliance.

President Donald Trump has repeatedly criticized alliance members for not spending enough on defense, and in the past has

called NATO "obsolete."

NATO members in 2014 agreed to "aim to move toward" increasing defense spending to 2% of gross domestic product by 2024. The U.S. has been particularly critical of defense spending in Germany, which has Europe's biggest economy.

Merkel noted that Germany's spending has risen from 1.18% of the time of the 2014 decision to a planned 1.4% next year. It aims to reach 1.5% by 2024, and Merkel said that "people can rely on" Germany hitting 2% in the early 2030s.

The chancellor acknowledged that "Turkey has become alienated as a member state within NATO."

While there haven't been any serious suggestions that Turkey should leave NATO, despite a string of differences between Ankara and its partners, Merkel addressed its continued membership head-on.

"I say that Turkey should remain a NATO member and we should support that, because it is of geostrategic significance for NATO that Turkey is in the alliance," Merkel told lawmakers, while stressing that differences should be addressed.

Air Force: No hazard in precautionary landing at Okinawa air base

By SETH ROBSON

Stars and Stripes

Nothing dropped out of a C-17 Globemaster aircraft that was photographed with an open compartment after a precautionary landing at Kadena Air Base on Tuesday, the Air Force said.

Photographs of the aircraft published in Japanese newspapers show the open compartment on the plane, which returned to Kadena an hour after takeoff shortly before noon, according to the Okinawa Times.

Kadena's 18th Wing, in a state-

ment Tuesday evening, said the open flare/raft compartment is a safe and standard flight configuration for the C-17.

"It is not unsafe, unusual, or uncommon to fly the C-17 without this specific panel. We have confirmed with all appropriate

organizations at Kadena Air Base that there was no dropped object, unintentional missing parts, or any unsafe flying procedures before, during, or after the flight," officials said.

The Air Force's statement did not provide the reason for the

aircraft's return.

"Upon landing, it was confirmed that there was no appreciable risk of injury or property damage, and no threat to airmen or community safety," the statement said.

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MILITARY

2 pilots honored for heroism in Afghanistan

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

Two A-10 pilots who came to the rescue of American ground troops under heavy fire a decade ago in Afghanistan have been recognized for their aerial heroics with the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Maj. John "Sapper" Tice and Lt. Col. Anthony "Crack" Roe were awarded the medals earlier this month during a ceremony at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., home to the 303rd Fighter Squadron.

"Very rarely is the Distinguished Flying Cross awarded," current squadron commander Lt. Col. Rick Mitchell said during a ceremony attended by 200 people. "Even more rarely is the Distinguished Flying Cross awarded twice in the same day to two members of the exact same fighter squadron."

Roe was awarded the medal for a third time, for a 2008 operation that began at Bagram Airfield and supported a resupply convoy in a mountainous area southeast of the base, the Air Force said.

During the flight, Roe made radio contact with the Army commander of a platoon whose vehicles were disabled after being hit with rocket-propelled grenades, an Air Force account of the battle said.

Without a joint terminal attack controller on the ground to guide airstrikes, Roe was forced to declare a risky "emergency close air support" situation and ordered ground troops to take cover inside their vehicles.

Retired Brig. Gen. James Mackey, a former 303rd pilot and Roe's wingman that day, described a confusing battlefield in which it was a struggle to de-



PHOTOS BY ALEX CHASE/U.S. Air Force

termine friendly from enemy forces.

At one point, a smoke grenade landed on the hillside and rolled down next to the soldiers engaged with the enemy.

"Next thing we hear is, 'Do not shoot that smoke.' We figured that out," Mackey said during the ceremony. "A second mark goes up about two-thirds up the ridge line — that's our target."

Roe made his first pass with the A-10's gun, but the 30 mm rounds missed because of a weapons system error, the Air Force said.

On the next pass, Roe manually adjusted the system to get the elevation right and fired seven

rockets, hitting the enemy about 130 feet from the friendly forces, Mackey said.

"The extensive, deadly fire-fight lasted over an hour and our force's precise, timely and accurate firepower saved the lives of 16 U.S. Army members," the Air Force statement said. "Before the pilots arrived, they were down to their last clip of ammunition with planes to charge the hill."

Tice was awarded for a Dec. 2, 2010, mission that began at Kandahar Airfield in support of two Special Forces teams who were guarding Army engineers building a bridge in an area thick with Taliban fighters.

On the sortie, Tice saw a Taliban fighter who was scouting the U.S. troops, which enabled ground forces to "quickly neutralize the threat with internal assets."

After that, the Taliban launched an ambush with rocket-propelled grenades, machine guns and small-arms fire.

"Within seconds, the fierce battle intensified," the medal citation said. "Without any hesitation, Tice descended into the tactical effective range of the small-arms fire."

Tice performed six low-altitude passes, hitting Taliban fighters at four different fighting positions. He fired 1,140 rounds from the A-

10's gun, the Air Force said.

"As a result, he eliminated 32 enemy combatants with zero casualties to coalition forces, and saved the lives of 50 U.S. Marines, 24 U.S. Army Special Forces soldiers and one U.S. Air Force airman," the Air Force said.

Col. Mike Schultz, commander of the 442nd Fighter Wing, lauded his fellow airmen before he pinned the medal on Tice.

"I'm humbled to be amongst these two," Schultz said. "I don't feel quite adequate for even touching the medal. It's that big of a deal."

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Norway's F-35s ready for action in Northern Europe

By CHRISTOPHER DENNIS
Stars and Stripes

Norway's first F-35 jets are now operational, an achievement that U.S. officials say will bolster defense in a region where Russia is increasing its presence.

Maj. Gen. Tonje Skinnerland, Norway's air chief, announced that the multrole F-35A Lightning II achieved initial operating capability earlier this month after completing a deployment to Rygge Air Station near the Swedish border, a government statement said.

The move gives Norway a new way to train with NATO partners operating the Lockheed Martin warplanes.

"The declaration of IOC of Norway's F-35 fleet marks a major milestone that will increase their ability to work with the United States and other F-35 partner nations in support of regional defense," Brandi Schiff, spokesperson for the Joint Strike

Fighter program, said in an email Wednesday.

Initial operational capability means the F-35s are capable of flying interdiction, basic close air support and limited suppression or destruction of enemy air defenses, according to an Air Force fact sheet. Norway, a founding member of NATO in 1949, is the third European nation after Italy and Britain to achieve this status for their F-35s.

Norway's F-35 status is important because of the country's "invaluable expertise in the North Atlantic and the Arctic," Schiff said.

The Arctic has become a point of heightened concern for the West in connection with Russia's



Skinnerland



An F-35 makes a successful drag chute test in Norway. U.S. officials say regional defenses will be strengthened now that one of Norway's fleets of F-35s is operational.

military buildup in the region. As Arctic ice melts due to climate change, Russia and China have taken steps to increase their presence in the High North.

In an effort to also boost the U.S. presence, Marines now operate

the planes will take over the quick reaction alert mission in Evenes, north of the Arctic Circle, from the Norwegian air force's F-16s, said Maj. Stian Roen, a spokesperson for the Royal Norwegian Air Force.

Norway currently has 15 F-35s in its inventory and has ordered a total of 52 of the fifth-generation fighters to gradually replace its fleet of F-16s, which have been in service since the early 1980s.

The F-35 program has long been plagued by cost overruns, delays and global parts shortages. However, costs are being brought down, and the aircraft will be the most advanced in the world, U.S. officials have said.

Besides the United States, 11 other nations are buying the planes. Turkey was kicked out of the program after purchasing the Russian S-400 air defense system, the White House said in July.

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PACIFIC

Threat: N. Korea 'realized creating a sense of urgency on the US side is a good ... tactic'

FROM FRONT PAGE

his weapons program as long as he doesn't fire off another ICBM. But that position may soon cost the U.S. president: Kim is threatening to up the stakes if Trump doesn't meet a year-end deadline to ease up on sanctions choking his country's economy.

"Fundamentally, they're realized creating a sense of urgency on the U.S. side is a good negotiating tactic," said Maitland Oba, a former American diplomat who worked on Korean Peninsula issues. "They think they can get the most out of Washington right now by heightening pressure and suggesting things could get worse in 2020."

North Korea has delivered blunt statements recently that have referenced Trump's campaign appearances and point to another ICBM test.

"We, without being given anything, gave things the U.S. president can brag about but the U.S. side has not yet taken any corresponding step," a spokesman for the State Affairs Commission headed by Kim said earlier this month. He added that the U.S. will face a "greater threat" if it does nothing.

North Korea froze all missile

testing after its Nov. 28, 2017, launch of a Hwasong-15 ICBM, which flew about 2,800 miles into the atmosphere — roughly the distance from New York to Los Angeles. In May it resumed the program with a vengeance, firing off nearly two dozen solid-fuel ballistic missiles since then to make it one of the most active testing years since Kim took power in 2011.

Solid-propellant ballistic missiles — especially the shorter-range versions — can be hidden in warehouses, rolled out on a mobile launcher and fired quickly. Liquid-propelled missiles, on the other hand, can be easier to spot by spy satellites monitoring vehicles that carry fuel and oxidizer needed for a launch.

"Given what we've already seen in the country, if they rolled out a solid-propellant ICBM in the next six months to a year, I wouldn't be shocked," said Ankit Panda, an adjunct senior fellow at the Federation of American Scientists who specializes in North Korea's weapons systems. "If the North Koreans do go ahead and develop a solid-propellant ICBM, that would complicate allied war planning for preemption."

The tests included a new, nu-

clear-capable, hypersonic KN-23 missile that can strike all of South Korea, including U.S. forces stationed south of Seoul within two minutes of launch and the southern city of Busan in less than four minutes. It also showed off a range of its solid-fuel rockets in October with a new ballistic Pukguksong-3 missile designed to be fired from a submarine. From land, it could hit almost all of Japan.

"If you launch one or many of these at South Korea, you have between seconds and minutes to decide if this is a conventional attack, a nuclear attack or some other WMD payload," said Melissa Hanham, deputy director of the Open Nuclear Network, a weapons expert specializing in the analysis of satellite imagery.

The risk for the Pentagon, she said, is that North Korea could use these weapons to launch a multifaceted attack hitting American military assets in Japan and South Korea to impede a response while it also targets the U.S. mainland with ICBMs, which could carry multiple warheads in the payload.

"It's a strategy that doesn't put all of its eggs in one basket," Hanham said.

Still, North Korea's weapons



KOREAN CENTRAL NEWS AGENCY/AP

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, center, inspects a military unit on Changrin Islet in North Korea. Independent journalists were not given access to cover the event depicted in this image.

program has some major questions. Some of the biggest are whether it has developed a re-entry vehicle to deliver a warhead, as well as its ability to target specific locations such as the White House or Empire State Building. Many weapons experts see North Korea as technologically developed enough to master those challenges.

Kim also must think about Russia and China, two countries in position to help him with veto power at the Security Council, that wouldn't appreciate another ICBM test. And, ultimately, it

could further hurt Kim's goal of boosting the economy if it starts raising tensions once again.

"The challenge is that North Korea is the geopolitical equivalent of the boy who cried wolf," said Oba, the former U.S. diplomat. "It has raised tensions so often, in such a restrained, calculated way, that any longtime North Korea observer has to wonder how serious Pyongyang really is when it has also demonstrated a real interest in sanctions relief and diplomacy with the United States."

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WAR/MILITARY

NATO, Boeing agree to \$1B update of AWACS

BY LORNE COOK
Associated Press

BRUSSELS — NATO and U.S. aircraft-maker Boeing agreed Wednesday to a \$1 billion contract to refurbish the military alliance's aging fleet of surveillance planes, ensuring they can continue to serve as the organization's eye in the sky until 2035.

The agreement, which was not actually signed Wednesday, was made public just days before President Donald Trump joins his NATO counterparts in London for a Dec. 4 summit marking the 70th anniversary of the world's biggest security alliance.

Trump is expected to make fresh demands on his European and Canadian partners to significantly step up defense spending. Critics say he is intent on drumming up business for the U.S. defense industry.

NATO's contract announcement provides a timely reminder that money is going to Boeing although other European contractors will be involved in the refurbishment, which is expected to be completed by 2027.

Purchased in 1977 at the height of the Cold War, when Jimmy Carter became U.S. president and as a missile crisis with the

then-Soviet Union was beginning to fester in Europe, the 14 Boeing E-3 planes cost almost \$8 billion.

"The modernization will ensure NATO remains at the leading edge of technology," NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg told reporters at a military airport outside Brussels, not far from the alliance's new \$1 billion headquarters.

He said the upgrade will provide the Airborne Warning and Control planes, known as AWACS, "with sophisticated new communications and networking capabilities so these aircraft can continue their vital mission and contribute to our security."

The planes were deployed in U.S. skies after the Sept. 11 attacks to help protect cities and nuclear power plants. They were used during the Russia-Ukraine crisis, to assist Turkey during the war in Syria and to help the coalition fighting Islamic State.

Beyond their role as NATO's eye in the sky, the planes can be used for air-policing and support in counterterrorism or evacuation operations, and provide help during natural disasters. They can stay aloft for eight hours at a time and watch over an area of more than 120,000 square miles.

Developed years before the in-



PHOTOS BY VIRGINIA MAYO/AP

Military personnel brief the media from the inside of an AWACS plane Wednesday at Melsbroek military airport in Belgium. NATO and Boeing on Wednesday marked the signing of a \$1 billion contract to modernize the Alliance's fleet of AWACS aircraft.



An agreement between NATO and Boeing seeks to ensure that NATO AWACS continue to support the alliance's missions to 2035.

ternet and mobile telephones were in common use, they seem almost quaint in an age where a pilotless drone has flown for 40 consecutive hours and stealth technologies wreak havoc with many

modern surveillance systems. But the maintenance program will see computer hardware and software upgraded to turn around double the intelligence information, data and imagery that they

currently handle, whether it be of air, ground, sea or space origin.

The surveillance aircraft, which are based in Germany, are among the few military assets that NATO owns as an alliance. Member nations own all the other equipment. A new drone program has also been set afoot, with the first of five Global Hawks delivered to a base in Italy last week.

NATO experts have warned for years that this plane-based surveillance platform will not work after 2035.

They have urged the alliance's 29 member nations to quickly decide how to replace the fleet by then, given the roughly 20-year time gap required to develop new surveillance technologies.

Frogman: Gallagher case has raised important debates, retired SEAL says

FROM FRONT PAGE

The case has spurred conversations among the ranks about how to move past the uproar while also addressing the problems that led to it. SEALs still in uniform and those who are retired told The Associated Press that the debate is raging in private online forums.

Some believe the president should not have used his authority as commander in chief to erase the sentence handed down by military jurors who convicted Gallagher of posing with a dead Islamic State captive. Jurors recommended that he be demoted.

Gallagher was acquitted of murder charges in the fatal stabbing of the captive and attempted murder charges for allegedly shooting at civilians during his deployment to Iraq in 2017.

Other SEALs believe Trump had no choice but to intervene because of the Navy's botched handling of the case, which included the prosecution tracking the emails of Gallagher's lawyers during the court-martial, which the judge noted violated his due process rights.

Let accountability rest at the appropriate level, and that's how we get this right. That's why we have commanders and senior enlisted advisers. We have to trust them with that.

Jeff Eggers
retired SEAL who also served on the National Security Council under President Barack Obama

They thought Navy commanders went too far by calling a review board last week to determine whether Gallagher should remain a SEAL just as the Bronze Star recipient was preparing to retire after two decades of service.

Bill Brown, an enlisted SEAL who left the service in 2005, reached out Friday to the Navy's top SEAL, Rear Adm. Colin Green, to let him know many SEALs shared that point of view.

"I told him, 'With all due respect, admiral, sometimes you've got to let a guy ride out into the sunset,'" he said.

Brown said Trump was looking out for warfighters. Many SEALs have not felt that trust with Navy leadership, which has called for a crackdown on everything from uniform standards to grooming.

Meanwhile, the Navy has been

sending its top warriors on multiple deployments. Gallagher deployed eight times.

Some fear being judged when they return home, Brown said.

"When you're in a combat zone, you don't think about anything except worrying about your mission," he said. "We want to make sure our officers have our back."

Others believe some will now be wary of reporting wrongdoing.

Trump also pardoned two other service members — a former Army special forces soldier set to stand trial next year in the killing of a suspected Afghan bombmaker in 2010 and an Army officer who had been convicted of murder for ordering his soldiers to fire on three unarmed Afghan men in 2012, killing two.

On Sunday, Defense Secretary Mark Esper fired Navy Secretary

Richard Spencer after learning he had privately proposed to the White House that Gallagher be allowed to retire at his current rank and without losing his status as a SEAL. Esper said Spencer had not told him of the proposal to the White House, causing him to lose "trust and confidence."

But even before receiving Trump's order to allow Gallagher to retire with his full rank, Esper said he had decided the review process should be stopped in part because of the damage it would do to the institution.

"As professional as they are," he said of the Navy review board members, who were all SEALs, "no matter what they would decide, they would be criticized from many sides, which would further drag this issue on, dividing the institution. I want the

SEALS and the Navy to move beyond this now, fully focused on their warfighting mission."

Jeff Eggers, a combat veteran SEAL who retired in 2013 after serving 20 years, said a certain degree of public scrutiny can be good, but the force works best in the shadows and holding its own accountable.

Still, he said, the case has raised important debates among SEALs about how much the force needs to focus on good order and discipline while also encouraging risk taking.

In the end, the answers must come from the SEALs and their leaders with civilian oversight, said Eggers, who served on the National Security Council during the Obama administration. The process the military has built to deal with war crimes should be trusted, he said.

"Let accountability rest at the appropriate level, and that's how we get this right," he said. "That's why we have commanders and senior enlisted advisers. We have to trust them with that."

NATION

Calif. officials hope rain aids wildfire battle

Associated Press

GOLETA, Calif. — Firefighters are hoping rainy weather will douse a wildfire that threatens thousands of homes in the coastal foothills north of Los Angeles.

The wind-whipped fire that erupted Monday raged through tinder-dry brushy canyons in the same area where a 1990 blaze destroyed more than 400 homes.

No homes had burned as of Tuesday night, but about 2,400 homes and other buildings in the Goleta area near Santa Barbara remained threatened, fire officials said.

The National Weather Service expected rain to hit the region before dawn Wednesday, with up to an inch possible as the storm moved through.

The rain should help drench the flames. Forecasters said it probably won't fall strongly enough to

trigger any major mudslides on the fire-stripped ground.

Most of the fire's growth occurred Monday, and while the burned area increased on Tuesday, about 4,000 of the 5,500 people who had been ordered to evacuate were being allowed home.

Fire commanders described a fierce battle that saved homes as the blaze consumed brush in an area that hadn't burned in 29 years.

"We've had winds move up slope, down slope, across the slope," Santa Barbara County fire Battalion Chief Anthony Stornetta said.

The fire was 10% contained Tuesday night after burning nearly 7 square miles, much of it in Los Padres National Forest.

The steep terrain, coupled with dry vegetation and erratic winds, made for a tough fire fight.



NOAH BERGER/AP

Firefighters battle the Cave Fire as it flares up Tuesday along Highway 154 in the Los Padres National Forest above Santa Barbara, Calif.

"It's just a hard, difficult piece of country to fight fire in and the weather is the most extreme anywhere around," said Jim Harris, Los Padres National Forest fire chief.

Rudy Gruber, 79, watched the smoke and flames from the top of a hill near his house in Santa Barbara.

Despite orders to evacuate, he said he decided not to leave

because he didn't think the fire would cross a canyon to his home. Plus, it would be tough to move his 50-pound tortoise, Amstel.

Even so, he's been prepared for about a year, packing photo albums, computers and a carrier for his cat, Scooter.

Gruber, who's lived in the area since 1976, was facing his fifth fire but said he's evacuated only once, when he saw smoke in his

neighborhood in 1978. He didn't see any this time, so he decided to stay put.

"We're better prepared than we used to be," Gruber said. "We've gone through it so many times now."

Helicopters dropped water on the fire during the night, and daylight allowed air tankers to drop long strips of fire retardant to box in the flames.

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NATION

Judiciary Committee to take over impeachment

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The House Judiciary Committee is set to take over the impeachment probe of President Donald Trump, scheduling a hearing for next week as they push closer to a possible vote on actual charges of "high crimes and misdemeanors."

The Judiciary panel scheduled the hearing as the separate Intelligence Committee on Tuesday released two last transcripts from its depositions, including from a White House budget official who detailed concerns among colleagues as Trump or-

dered them, through intermediaries, to put a hold on military aid to Ukraine.

Trump ordered the hold as he was pressuring Ukraine's president to investigate Democrats, the issue at the heart of the impeachment probe. Multiple government witnesses testified in impeachment hearings held by the Intelligence panel this month that Trump directed his personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani to take the lead on Ukraine policy and that Giuliani pushed an "irregular" diplomatic channel.

The Intelligence Committee is wrapping up the investigative phase of the probe and

preparing its report for the next. Committee Chairman Adam Schiff has said the report could be released soon after the House returns from its Thanksgiving break.

The initial Judiciary hearing on Dec. 4, the day after lawmakers return, will feature legal experts who will examine questions of constitutional grounds as the panel decides whether to write articles of impeachment against Trump. Judiciary Chairman Jerry Nadler, D-N.Y., said Tuesday his panel's hearing will "explore the framework put in place to respond to serious allegations of impeachable misconduct."

Democrats are aiming for a final House vote by Christmas, which would set the stage for a likely Senate trial in January.

Trump, meanwhile, will put to distance between himself and Giuliani in a radio interview Tuesday. Asked by host Bill O'Reilly what Giuliani was doing on his behalf in Ukraine, Trump said, "I don't even know." Asked if he had directed Giuliani to go to Ukraine on his behalf, Trump said, "No."

In a phone call to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy on July 25, Trump said several times he would have Giuliani contact Zelenskiy.



EVAN VUCCI/AP

First lady Melania Trump watches as President Donald Trump pardons Butter, the national Thanksgiving turkey, in the Rose Garden of the White House on Tuesday.

President offers jokes about investigation at annual turkey pardon

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump couldn't resist riffing on the House impeachment inquiry Tuesday as he continued the tradition of pardoning a Thanksgiving turkey, generating holiday season laughter at the expense of House Intelligence Committee Chairman Rep. Adam Schiff, one of his chief antagonists in Congress.

Trump joked that the pair of North Carolina-bred turkeys he was about to pardon had been raised to "remain calm under any condition," a trait that he said will be "very important because they've already received subpoenas to appear in Adam Schiff's basement on Thursday."

"It seems the Democrats are accusing me of being too soft on turkey," Trump told guests seated in the White House Rose Garden, where he was flanked by his wife, first lady Melania Trump. But he told the turkeys that, "you and I have actually met. It's very unusual."

Trump's Republican defenders in Congress had criticized Schiff for holding closed-depositions in a secure room in the basement of the Capitol Visitor Center, which Democrats said was necessary for the investigation. Trump has

criticized the impeachment inquiry as a "scam" and a "hoax."

Trump also has claimed to barely know some of the witnesses — including Gordon Sondland, Trump's ambassador to the European Union — who testified during public impeachment hearings chaired by Schiff, a California Democrat.

Testimony from several officials showed that Sondland had been in frequent contact with Trump around the time Trump spoke with the president of Ukraine about doing a politically beneficial "favor."

Schiff is leading the House impeachment inquiry for his committee. Meanwhile, as the White House ceremony was about to begin, the House Judiciary Committee announced it has scheduled an impeachment hearing for Dec. 4, when Trump is expected to be in London for a NATO conference.

Trump's latest act of clemency benefited Butter, a 47-pound turkey granted a "full and complete" pardon. Trump said he was also sparing Butter's alternate, named Bread, who weighs 45 pounds, from being served up on a Thanksgiving table.

Both gobblers will get to spend the rest of their lives on a farm at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Va.

Washington battles leave voters cold in battleground Wisconsin

BY ALEXANDRA JAFFE

Associated Press

RACINE, Wis. — There's not a lot that Republicans and Democrats in this political battlefield agree on, but the impeachment probe into President Donald Trump may have surfaced one: The public hearings aren't moving the needle.

"Everything they say, it's so repetitive. To me, it's like they're beating their heads against the wall," said Harry Rose, 78, a retired factory worker and Trump supporter in Racine County, a swing county in the swing state of Wisconsin.

Nicole Morrison, 36, a nurse who can't see herself voting for Trump in 2020, had a similar review.

"There's so much information that sometimes it's hard to decide which is the truth and which is just rumors," she said. "So I just don't pay attention to it."

After 30 hours of televised hearings, a dozen witnesses, at least a couple of major revelations and scores of tweeted rebuttals, voters in Wisconsin and nationwide aren't changing their minds about removing the Republican president. If they came into the inquiry defensive of Trump, they likely still are. And if they were inclined to think the president abused his power, they didn't need televised hearings to prove it.

"For the most part, most Americans already have pretty solidified views of the president," said Josh Schwerin, senior strategist for the Democratic super PAC Priorities USA. "There's a small segment of the population that can be moved, and they're not paying as close attention to the day-to-day ins and outs of the impeachment hearings."

It's a disappointing — if not unexpected — response for Democrats, who had hoped to use the hearings to sway public opinion. Without that backing, it's virtually impossible to imagine Republican senators voting to convict Trump.

It's also a reaction that leaves the political impact of this dramatic chapter in American history remarkably uncertain. If the division on the question holds, and



MORRY GASH/AP

Harry Rose talks about the impeachment hearings Friday in Sturtevant, Wis.

independents remain disengaged, it is possible that impeachment and a Senate trial may ultimately play little role in Trump's reelection bid next year.

Two polls released this week showed the public remains roughly evenly divided over whether Trump should be impeached and removed from office. Although there was a one-time increase in support after the inquiry launched, polls have since remained stable.

A CNN survey conducted over the weekend showed that 50% of Americans believe Trump should be impeached and removed from office, roughly the same as in late October and late September.

Meanwhile, Trump's job approval has remained steady. A Quinnipiac University survey of registered voters nationwide also conducted last weekend found a similar split on whether Trump should be impeached and removed, and just 13% of those who have an opinion say they might change their mind.

In Wisconsin, views on impeachment appear to be slightly more negative. A Marquette University Law School poll of Wisconsin registered voters that was conducted during the first week of the impeachment hearings showed 47% of registered voters approve of the job Trump is doing, and more expressed opposition than support for impeachment and removal, 53% to 40%, figures largely unchanged from October.

The poll was conducted before U.S. Ambassador to the European Union Gordon Sonland and former top aide Fiona Hill offered testimony that largely corroborated allegations that Trump tried to pressure a foreign political rival Joe Biden.

The entrenched divisions are clear even in Racine County, a place with a history of shifting political winds. The county voted for Democrat Barack Obama in 2008 and 2012, and then swung to support Trump in 2016.

The county, just south of Milwaukee, is divided between the Democratic-leaning electorate in and surrounding Racine and the more conservative electorate in the rural and suburban areas. Most of the county's residents worked white-collar jobs in 2019, like administrative services and sales, and the median household income was just under \$65,000, slightly above the state average.

If Democrats hope to win it back, they'll have to persuade voters like Jo-Ann Knutson to come back. The 70-year-old retiree lives in downtown Racine and voted for Trump in 2016 because she didn't like Democrat Hillary Clinton. She's been watching the impeachment hearings, but she's still not sure what to think.

Trump "is not my favorite person, and I don't care for how he talks about people, but I have not made a firm decision because I don't think all of the facts are out yet," she said.

NATION

Trump rallies Fla. faithful, rips political foes

By ANTHONY MAN,
SKYLER SWISHER
AND BROOKE BAITINGER
Sun Sentinel

SUNRISE, Fla. — The two diametrically opposed world views of President Donald Trump came together in one place Tuesday: the BB&T Center, where Trump held one of his signature rallies.

Inside, a devoted crowd welcomed home the president, who recently declared himself a Florida resident. Outside, protesters displayed scorn and fury, along with the Baby Trump balloon, the orange-haired, inflatable infant clad in a diaper and clutching a cellphone.

Trump didn't hold back. He whipped the crowd into a chant of "bull----" when discussing the impeachment charges against him. He took shots at "Sleepy Joe Biden." He railed against the "corrupt" media. He played up crowd favorites, declaring that he was building his wall. He addressed his health telling the crowd his "gorgeous chest" is just fine.



SUSAN WALSH/AP

People listen as President Donald Trump speaks at a campaign rally in Sunrise, Fla., on Tuesday.

At one moment, he said he would defend Thanksgiving from anyone who would want to change its name, and he assured his fans he would easily win a second term.

"The crazy Democrats are going down in a landslide, and that landslide is going to start right here in the great state of Florida," Trump said.

Trump supporters packed the

arena, filling it to capacity. They wore shirts with slogans such as "No Quia Pro Quo" and "Read the Transcript." Florida's top politicians, including Gov. Ron DeSantis, briefly joined Trump on stage.

Trump took the stage about 7:30 p.m. in front of thousands of cheering supporters at the Sunrise arena, where supporters started arriving as soon as the parking lots opened at 7 a.m. for a "homecoming" campaign rally.

The crowd was enthusiastic, cheering many of Trump's lines and offering boos when he mentioned an enemy. During a pause, a few people in the crowd started shouting, "We love you!"

The arena, which can hold more than 20,000 people, was filled to capacity.

Trump forcefully decried the impeachment investigation that is dominating the political landscape.

The president said everybody says "that's really bull----." The crowd responded by chanting "bull----."

"We had virtually no rights, no due process," during the inquiry he said, using his favorite epithet for U.S. Rep. Adam Schiff of California, chairman of the Intelligence Committee and leader of the impeachment investigation, calling him "Shifty Schiff."

Trump brought up one of his most controversial recent decisions, intervening on behalf of three military men convicted in war crimes cases, touting it as standing up for the nation's warriors.

Trump brought up his sudden Nov. 16 trip to Walter Reed National Medical Center, which prompted lots of speculation that the president had an unannounced health problem. The president repeated the White House staff explanation that he had a free Saturday so he decided to get a head start on his annual physical, which isn't due until next year.

He said he's perfectly healthy. "Let me tell you, if I didn't feel great, I wouldn't be ranting and raving to 21-22,000 people."

Probe of police shooting could revive scrutiny of Buttigieg

By MICHELLE R. SMITH
Associated Press

The deadly shooting of a black man by a white police officer last summer in South Bend, Ind., highlighted Mayor Pete Buttigieg's struggle to win black support for his presidential campaign.

The issue could resurface as the prosecutor leading an investigation into the matter says his work likely won't be finished before February, just as voters begin deciding whether Buttigieg should be the

Democratic nominee.

"It's accurate to say we won't be finished before February," Ric Hertel, the special prosecutor running the investigation, told The Associated Press. "I'd like to be finished by the end of the year. Trying to be realistic though."

Sgt. Ryan O'Neill was investigating a report of a person breaking into cars in June when he said he fatally shot Eric Logan after he refused orders to drop a knife. Logan's family sued in federal court, accusing O'Neill of using excessive deadly force.

O'Neill resigned in July. The shooting wasn't captured on police video because O'Neill's dash and body cameras weren't activated.

The fallout from the shooting presented Buttigieg with some of the toughest moments of his White House campaign.

Buttigieg stepped away from the campaign trail and faced angry residents at an emotional town hall in South Bend, a city of about 100,000 residents, a quarter of whom are black.

He acknowledged that his administration

had failed to recruit more minority police officers and utilize police body cameras.

Since then, he has frequently decried systemic racism in America and released a plan intended to address disparities in health, education, wealth, criminal justice and voting rights.

But he's still struggled to rally black voters to his campaign.

A recent Monmouth University poll in South Carolina found that just 1% of blacks in the state support Buttigieg.

Bloomberg says US needs more, not fewer immigrants

Associated Press

PHOENIX — Presidential candidate Michael Bloomberg said Tuesday that the United States needs "an awful lot more immigrants rather than less."

On his second day campaigning for the Democratic nomination, the former New York City mayor contrasted his views on immigration with President Donald Trump's restrictive policies and laid out a vision of a multicultural society enriched by immigrants.

"We need immigrants to take all the different kinds of jobs that the country needs — improve our culture, our cuisine, our religion, our dialogue and certainly improve our economy," the billionaire told reporters at a Mexican restaurant in Phoenix.

He blasted Trump's policies that resulted in the separation of families arriving on the border.

"Ripping kids away from their parents is a disgrace," he said.

Bloomberg reiterated his Nov.

17 apology for supporting New York's stop-question-and-frisk police strategy, a practice he embraced as mayor and continued to defend despite its disproportionate impact on people of color.

He said it was a mistake but also credited it with reducing New York's murder rate.

"How many times do you hear elected officials say, 'I made a mistake?'" Bloomberg said. "None of us do everything perfectly. I'm sorry it happened, I can't rewrite history. Let's get on with it."

Bloomberg spoke in the back of a small restaurant in a heavily Latino area a few miles east of downtown Phoenix, the type of community that has helped propel Democrats to success after decades of Republican domination in Arizona. Latinos organized against a tough 2010 immigration law and against Sheriff Joe Arpaio's immigration patrols, the latter of which was struck down in the courts for racial profiling.



*Postmark by Dec. 24th and Santa may have time to send a note in return!

NATION

US travelers brace for snowy holiday

Storm wreaks havoc as it moves into upper Midwest

BY JEFF BAENEN, COLLEEN SLEVIN
AND DAVID KOENIG
Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — A storm packing heavy, blinding snow and fierce winds that wreaked havoc as it whipped through Colorado, Wyoming and Nebraska marched into the upper Midwest on Wednesday as anxious Thanksgiving travelers buckled up and barrelled headlong into a busy, if not perilous, holiday week.

The wintry storm that left at least one person dead was expected to push eastward into South Dakota, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin, while a "bomb cyclone" weather phenomenon was expected to simultaneously topple trees, knock out power and dump snow as it rolled into California and Oregon.

The one-two punch made for a double whammy of early wintry weather that threatened to scramble plans for millions of people nationwide during one of the busiest travel weeks of the year. Those who left early were confronted with icy and snow-covered roads that made it difficult — if not impossible — to navigate and prompted law enforcement in many places not to even try.

"Stay put," Kansas Highway Patrol Trooper Tod Hileman urged drivers in a tweet, even as a stretch of Interstate 70 on the state's western border with Colorado reopened after temporarily closing Tuesday at the height of the storm.

Minnesotans prepared Wednesday for a winterlike blast that was expected to de-

liver heavy snow and powerful winds that had officials warning drivers to stay off the roads at least until the winds died down a bit.

At Denver International Airport, about 10 inches of snow mixed with winds that limited visibility prompted the cancellation of about 30% of the airport's average daily 1,600 flights.

The storm dumped nearly 3 feet of snow in parts of northern Colorado and closed long stretches of highways there and in Wyoming. One person was killed and two others were injured when a tractor-trailer jackknifed and was hit by two other trucks on Interstate 70 near the Colorado ski town of Vail.

About 1,100 people spent the night at the airport, including many cadets from the Air Force Academy near Colorado Springs who either missed flights or wanted to get to the airport before road conditions deteriorated, airport spokeswoman Alex Renteria said.

Among them was cadet Sadie Lohman, whose trip to the airport took three hours — twice the normal driving time. She got to the airport at 1 a.m., 10 hours before her scheduled flight to Chicago for Thanksgiving.

"I just wanted to beat the storm. We kind of left in the middle of it so it kind of didn't work, but we got here," she told Denver news station KCNC-TV.

Bizzard and wintry weather warnings extended into the Great Lakes states with the storm bringing high winds and snow to



PAT CHRISTMAN, THE (DETROIT) FREE PRESS/AP

Ron Geppert clears snow from his driveway Wednesday in Mankato, Minn., after an overnight snowstorm. A day after bringing havoc to the Rocky Mountains, a powerful winter storm rolled across the Midwest on Wednesday, threatening to scramble Thanksgiving plans for millions of people.

Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin and a chance of snow over the weekend for parts of New England, said Alex Lamers, a National Weather Service meteorologist.

"That could be a coast-to-coast storm," he said.

The storm was expected to dump snow on the airport in Minneapolis, where Delta Air Lines is the major carrier, but most was expected to fall overnight when few flights were scheduled.

The storm system could mean disappointment for fans of the larger-than-life balloons flown at Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York.

Organizers were preparing for the possibility of grounding the iconic balloon characters because of 40-50 mph gusts in the forecast. Rules put in place after several people were injured by a balloon a year ago

require lower altitudes or full removal if sustained winds exceed 23 mph and gusts exceed 34 mph. The decision will be made on parade day.

The second storm began hitting the West Coast of the U.S., bringing snow to the mountains and wind and rain along the coasts of California and Oregon.

The bomb cyclone — a rapid drop in air pressure — could bring waves of up to 35 feet, wind gusts of up to 75 mph and heavy snow in the mountains.

Forecasters warned of "difficult to impossible travel conditions" across much of northern Arizona later this week as that storm dumps about 2 feet of snow. The approaching storm accelerated the annual winter closure of the highway leading to the North Rim of the Grand Canyon by five days.

Commuters stage full Thanksgiving meal on NY subway

BY ALEX HORTON
The Washington Post

The movable guerrilla feast was adorned with the holiday essentials, and old and new friends gathered around turkey, greens, cider and stuffing set atop white tablecloths — eager for dollops of yams before the conductor arrived at their stop.

Subway riders raised their nonalcoholic bubbly for a prayer on the L Train to Brooklyn on Sunday evening. "Dear heavenly father, thank you for bringing us all together on this Thanksgiving Day," one man said, holding a champagne flute that sloshed with the moving train.

Predictably, the full Thanksgiving spread of a length of a crowded New York subway can went viral. Videos of the holiday meal show delighted onlookers gulping down sides, earning the bewilderment of germaphobes and a soft admonishment from the subway transportation authority.

The idea was sparked by the dreary L Train construction delays that have paralyzed Brooklyn commuters, comedian Jodell

"Joe Show" Lewis told The Washington Post.

"People are really unhappy waiting to ride this train," he said. "So we said, 'Let's bring joy and feed New Yorkers at the same time.'"

The plan was hatched over the summer by Lewis and his friend Christopher Dupree, a Brooklyn rapper and model who goes by Dupree God. It would be before Thanksgiving, but not on a heavy commuting day, they agreed, and have enough flair and communal spirit to avoid any official entanglements.

"It was about embracing New York City," Dupree said.

The pair brought in Brandi "Chef Bea" Baxter to whip up a black Caribbean-inspired meal complete with smoked turkey necks in collard greens, mashed potatoes and more.

"I was all for it from the jump," Baxter, owner of Briellegiance Catering Services, said Tuesday.

Baxter lugged the food into the Union Square stop in a rolling bag and suitcase, she said, and a fleet of friends took over their roles. Some set out gold-

colored plates. Others staged the electric candles. One person was assigned trash detail. Around 40 people were served on the train across eight stops, Baxter said.

MTRA workers saw the meal being set up in the Union Square station, Baxter said, but they did not intervene. Some of them even remarked about the good smell — not something that can be said about many New York subway cars.

The intersection of food and the New York subway has been tense this month, after police were filmed arresting a popular churro vendor in a Brooklyn subway stop, sparking fierce backlash and criticism that police have used vast resources to target food sellers and fare evaders.

"We were fortunate enough not to run into NYPD," Baxter said.

Instead, riders laughed at the spectacle and joined in, passing around plates and complimenting the chefs on their offerings.

"It's a pretty morose train," passenger Flannery Foster said. "It's awful. So everyone was happy to have something pleasant to enjoy."



WAKE COULTER/AP

A photo provided by Wake Coulter shows a Thanksgiving meal being served on a New York City subway L Train on Sunday.

NATION

More clues point to chemical in vaping illnesses

BY MIKE STOBBE
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Health officials said Tuesday they have more evidence that a certain chemical compound is a culprit in a national outbreak of vaping illnesses.

Researchers analyzed black market vaping cartridges seized in Minnesota during the outbreak this year and vaping liquid

seized in that state last year. The newer cartridges contained the compound vitamin E acetate, but none of the older samples did.

They also looked at vaping cartridges collected from a dozen patients. Vitamin E acetate was commonly found in those too.

The study was small, but it echoes other work that found the compound in the

damaged lungs of 29 patients across the country.

"The findings further support a potential role for vitamin E acetate in causing lung injury associated with vaping products," said Dr. Ruth Lynfield, a Minnesota health official.

Nearly 2,300 Americans who vape have gotten sick since March, many of them

teens and young adults, according to a recent tally by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. At least 47 people have died.

Most who got sick said they had vaped liquids that contain THC, the high-inducing part of marijuana. Vitamin E acetate has recently been used as a thickener in illicit vaping products that contain THC.



CHARLES REX ARBOGAST/AP

Bell ringer Carolyn Harper points to two ways to donate via mobile device to the Salvation Army's annual holiday red kettle campaign on Chicago's Magnificent Mile. Cashless shoppers can now use their smartphones to make a donation.

Cashless shoppers have a new option to give to Salvation Army

BY KATHLEEN FOODY
Associated Press

CHICAGO — Carolyn Harper made her pitch for donations to the Salvation Army with a smile on her face and a bell in her hand, trying to convince shoppers along Chicago's busy Michigan Avenue that there was "no line, no wait."

Despite her prodding, half a dozen people apologetically explained they had no cash to drop into the bright red kettle. Most passed on before Harper could explain there's a new way to donate to the classic fundraising campaign this year: with a smartphone.

Heather Bishop, 35, was among those who did wait to hear about the noncash option. She quickly completed her electronic donation while keeping an eye on her two young children after a stop at the American Girl Store.

"It was fast, very easy," Bishop said, adding that she was visiting the city from Wisconsin and doesn't carry cash while on trips. "All of my giving is online," she said.

The charity's leaders hope adding Apple and Google payment options will boost giving to the red kettle campaign, which makes up 10% of its annual fundraising. Those donations fund programs providing housing, food and other support to people in poverty.

"Those red kettle campaign funds help us throughout the entire year housing the homeless, feeding the hungry and helping families overcome poverty," said Dale Bannon, the assistant national community relations director for Salvation Army USA.

"I think the future is bright, but we have to be flex-

ible and provide multiple options for people to give."

Americans' dependence on physical cash to make purchases has declined over time, especially among people who make more than \$75,000 per year, according to the Pew Research Center. The same survey found about 46% of Americans "don't really worry much" about leaving home without cash because of all their other payment options.

Nonprofits of all types have increased their focus on online fundraising in response, but campaigns that rely on spur-of-the-moment donations outside stores directly feel the effects of consumers' cashless lifestyle.

The organization has tested other cashless options in recent years, including a text message-based program and credit and debit card readers that plugged into bell ringers' phones. But both were time consuming compared with dropping cash into the kettle.

The physical change to the kettles is subtle — a tag containing a microchip has been added to the Salvation Army sign attached to each red kettle stand.

Donors tap their phone to the tag, opening a donation form that suggests giving \$5, \$10 or \$25. Donors can type in a different amount.

People whose phones can't be compatible with contactless payment systems can use their camera to photograph a QR code, opening a similar donation form.

Any mobile donations are sent to the Salvation Army chapter nearest to the donor's billing zip code.

This year marks the 129th campaign using the bright red kettles, staffed by bell ringers outside grocery stores and popular shopping spots.

Trump campaign, GOP attack Google ad policy

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump's reelection campaign and other Republican election groups criticized tech giant Google on Tuesday for making it harder for political advertisers to target specific types of people.

The GOP groups said the changes will lead directly to suppressing voter turnout and would "disproportionately" hurt Republican candidates.

Google has said that, beginning in January in the United States, advertisers will be able to target only political ads based on broad categories such as sex, age and postal code. Currently, ads can be tailored to more specific groups, such as political affiliation.

The Trump campaign and Republican groups said Trump has built the greatest digital operation in politics, so Google's decision will "disproportionately impact both the Trump operation and all of the Republican candidates and organizations that derive strength from it."

"Google should immediately reverse its decision in order to ensure they do not suppress voter turnout during both the Democrat primaries and the 2020 general election," the GOP groups said.

Democratic political groups have also been critical of Google's new policy.

"Tech companies should not reduce the power of the grassroots just because it is easier than addressing abuse on their platforms," said leaders of the Democratic National Committee and allied groups helping oversee Democratic congressional campaigns.

Social media companies are grappling with how best to prevent a repeat of 2016 when Russian operatives, masquerading as Americans, used targeted advertisements and intentionally falsified news articles to interact with and attempt to deceive tens of millions of social media users in the U.S.

Google's announcement follows the decision by Twitter to ban political ads. Twitter also placed restrictions on ads related to social causes such as climate change or abortion rights. Twitter said the move would help reduce the flow of election-related misinformation.

The Trump campaign protested that change as well said

Google's will have more impact. "Much has been made of Twitter's equally concerning decision to ban political ads and suppress speech, but because advertising on that platform is ineffective and only a tiny percentage of Americans use Twitter, their impact is insignificant," the Trump campaign and GOP groups said in a joint release. "Google, however, is a serious platform with very deep reach across the entire country."

Google said in response to the Republican groups' complaints Tuesday that it's going to stay the course. "We know that political campaign strategists on both sides of the aisle have raised concerns about how our changes may alter their targeting strategies," said Google spokeswoman Charlotte Smith. "But we believe the balance we have struck ... is the right one."

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NATION

China criticized for abuses revealed by leaked papers

By MATTHEW LEE

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Tuesday that a cache of leaked documents proves that Chinese authorities are engaged in massive and systemic repression of Muslims and other minorities in western China as a number of foreign governments expressed serious concern about the scale of the campaign.

Pompeo said the documents underscored an overwhelming and growing body of evidence that China's leaders are responsible for gross human rights violations in the Xinjiang region.

"They detail the Chinese party's brutal detention and systematic repression of Uighurs and members of other Muslim minority groups in Xinjiang," Pompeo told reporters at a State Department news conference. "We call on the Chinese government to immediately release all those who are arbitrarily detained and to end its draconian policies that have terrorized its own citizens in Xinjiang."

Pompeo's comments come at a delicate time in U.S.-Chinese relations amid ongoing negotiations to end a trade war and U.S. concerns about the situation in Hong Kong, where pro-democracy protests have turned violent with clashes between police and demonstrators. Notably, his criticism was not accompanied by a warning about possible sanctions for the mass detentions, although U.S. lawmakers are pressing for penalties to be imposed.

"There are very significant human rights abuses," Pompeo said. "It shows that it's not random. It is intentional and it is ongoing."

The leaked classified documents were provided to the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, which worked with The Associated Press and news organizations around the world to publish the material.

The documents, which include guidelines for operating detention centers and instructions for how to use technology to target people, reveal that the camps in Xinjiang are not for voluntary job training, as Beijing has claimed.

They show the camps are used for forced ideological and behavioral reeducation. They also illustrate how Beijing uses a high-tech surveillance

system to target people for detention and to predict who will commit a crime.

Voluntary job training is the reason the Chinese government has given for detaining more than 1 million ethnic minorities, most of them Muslim. But a classified blueprint leaked to the news organizations shows the camps are instead precisely what former detainees have described: forced ideological and behavioral reeducation centers run in secret.

The documents lay out the Chinese government's deliberate strategy to lock up ethnic minorities even before they commit a crime and to rewire their thoughts and the language they speak.

The papers also show how Beijing is pioneering a new form of social control using data and artificial intelligence. Drawing on data collected by mass surveillance technology, computers issued the names of tens of thousands of people for interrogation or detention in just one week.

Pompeo said the documents should encourage other countries to come forward with their concerns.

U.S. allies were among the first to step up.

"We have serious concerns about the human rights situation in Xinjiang and the Chinese government's escalating crackdown, in particular the extra-judicial detention of over a million Uighur Muslims and other ethnic minorities," a British Foreign Office spokesperson said. "We want to see an end to the indiscriminate and disproportionate restrictions on the cultural and religious freedoms of Uighur Muslims and other ethnic minorities in Xinjiang."

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas told the German China-Cables team that "if indeed hundreds of thousands of Uighurs are being detained in camps, then the international community cannot close their eyes."

Grant's attorneys say a new analysis of DNA found on the victim's fingernails and clippings excludes Grant in the attack and points to another man as a suspect. Harris County District Attorney Kim Ogg said there is "substantial new evidence that points toward a person of interest," but authorities are "not there yet" in concluding that this new suspect was responsible for the killing.

Grant's attorneys say a new analysis of DNA found on the victim's fingernails and clippings excludes Grant in the attack and points to another man as a suspect. Harris County District Attorney Kim Ogg said there is "substantial new evidence that points toward a person of interest," but authorities are "not there yet" in concluding that this new suspect was responsible for the killing.

After a court hearing Tuesday morning in which he was granted a \$100,000 bond, Grant was released from custody late Tuesday afternoon. He was enthusiastically greeted by his mother, younger brother and other family and friends.

Grant, 42, told reporters his release was "a long time coming" and he thanked his family, the Innocence Project of Texas and God. He said he looked forward to enjoying Thanksgiving with his family, including eating a "big turkey" and his favorite dessert, peach cobbler.

"I really believe that the justice

Most in US favor life in prison over death penalty for murderers

By MARK BERMAN
The Washington Post

Most Americans say life in prison is a better punishment for murder than the death penalty, a significant shift from just a few years ago, according to a new Gallup poll.

A majority of Americans still support capital punishment, the poll shows, even though they are more likely to back life sentences in murder cases.

When asked to decide between the death penalty or life in prison without the possibility of parole, six in 10 people chose life sentences, the Gallup poll found. By comparison, 36% of people selected the death penalty. Another 4% said they had no opinion.

The poll, conducted via telephone interviews in October, is the latest illustration of how public sentiment has changed on the

death penalty amid declines in executions and death sentences across the country.

A number of states have abandoned the practice in recent years, with officials pointing to wrongful convictions and the drawn-out, expensive nature of such cases to explain their opposition. Supporters of the death penalty argue that it is a deterrent to severely violent crimes and that officials owe it to victims' relatives to carry out the sentences already decided by the justice system.

In Gallup's latest poll, 56% of Americans say the death penalty, while 42% oppose it. (Another 2% had no opinion.) That split has been relatively consistent in recent years, but it is narrower than it used to be. Five years earlier, 63% of people supported capital punishment and 33% opposed it.

In 2016, a Pew Research Sur-

vey found that support for the death penalty in murder cases had fallen to just below 50% for the first time since the early 1970s. Another Pew poll last year reported that support was back up to 54%.

Polls consistently show the level of support for the death penalty has declined in recent decades. In the mid-1990s, with the country still reeling from high violent crime rates, 4 out of 5 Americans supported the death penalty.

The Trump administration recently jumped into the debate, scheduling the first federal executions in nearly two decades. Last week, a federal judge blocked those executions, which were set to begin in December, ruling that the Justice Department's new lethal injection protocol was "not authorized" under federal law. The department is appealing that ruling.



JON SHAPLEY, HOUSTON CHRONICLE/AP

Lydell Grant, second from left, smiles after he was ordered released on bond Tuesday in Houston. Prosecutors and defense attorneys with the Innocence Project of Texas agreed that Grant should be released while the case is investigated further in the light of new DNA evidence.

Inmate serving life freed as innocence claims investigated

By JUAN A. LOZANO
Associated Press

Attorney's Office will go ahead and exonerate me because the evidence and the investigation of the case, it proves itself."

Ogg said authorities began investigating Grant's case several months ago after the fingernail evidence was retested with more advanced technology than had been available during the initial investigation and after the results excluded Grant.

The testing also resulted in a hit on the FBI's Combined DNA Index System, or CODIS database, that pointed to another individual as a person of interest, she said.

Ogg said the evidence pointing to this person of interest as the killer is "mounting," including evidence that shows he was in Houston around the time of the killing and that he left afterward. "We're working together to try and get to the bottom of things," she said. "We have to be methodical and we have to be swift but check out every detail because (Grant) was convicted by a jury and there were six eyewitnesses."

Mike Ware, who is the executive director of the Innocence Project of Texas and one of Grant's attorneys, said he believes erroneous eyewitness identifications based on outdated and flawed techniques used by police detectives also helped to wrongly convict Grant.

"We anticipate that the evidence is going to justify overwhelming that he should be exonerated of this crime that he was wrongfully convicted," Ware said.

Ogg said her office has let Scheerhoorn's family know it is investigating Grant's conviction.

"They want the right person to go to jail," she said.

NATION

3 hurt in explosion in Texas

Associated Press

PORT NECHES, Texas — Three workers were injured early Wednesday in a massive explosion at a Texas chemical plant that also blew out the windows and doors of nearby homes.

The fire continued to burn Wednesday morning at the TPC Group plant after the blast sent a large plume of smoke that stretched for miles. All employees have been accounted for, TPC said in confirming the three injuries involving two employees and a contractor.

The plant in Port Neches in southeast Texas, about 80 miles east of Houston, makes chemical and petroleum-based products. TPC said later Wednesday morning that it had no details on the cause of the explosion or the extent of damage to the plant.

Jefferson County Judge Jeff Branick told Beaumont TV station KBMT the blast awakened him early Wednesday at his home, and that it initially sounded like someone firing a gun into his house.

"When I got out there and grabbed my pistol and ran to the front door, I saw that the front and back door were splintered



An explosion at the TPC Group Port Neches Operations on Wednesday in Port Neches, Texas, injured three workers and blew out the windows and doors of nearby homes.

and wood had flown everywhere ... I could see the flames from the backyard," Branick said.

Jefferson County Emergency Management coordinator Mike White told the Beaumont Enterprise that five residents were being treated for minor injuries, mostly related to shattered glass.

White said state environmental officials are monitoring air quality but that no elevated chemical levels had been detected.

The Nederland Volunteer Fire Department warned people liv-

ing south of Interstate 10 near the plant to minimize their exposure to the chemical plume by sheltering in place, closing windows and turning off their heating and air conditioning systems. A mandatory evacuation was ordered for everyone within a half mile of the TPC plant, and the fire department said that evacuation could expand to a wider area.

Branick told Beaumont TV station KDFM that it's a miracle that no one died. Branick said one worker suffered burns and was

taken by medical helicopter to a Houston hospital. The others had a broken wrist and a broken leg.

Texas has seen multiple petrochemical industry blazes this year, including a March fire that burned for days near Houston and another that killed a worker at a plant in nearby Crosby.

In the March fire, prosecutors filed five water pollution charges against the company that owns the petrochemical storage facility after chemicals flowed into a nearby waterway.

At least 5 killed as fire strikes Minn. high-rise

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — A fire swept through a Minneapolis high-rise apartment building early Wednesday, killing five people and sending three others to the hospital with injuries, officials said.

There was no immediate indication what caused the blaze in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood, located in a part of Minneapolis called Little Mogadishu for the many Somali immigrants who have settled there.

The fire broke out on the 14th floor of the building, Fire Chief John Fruetel said. Firefighters found heavy smoke on the 16th and 17th floors as residents were evacuated through the building's stairwells.

One person who could not use the stairs to escape had to be helped out from the 13th-floor

elevator, fire officials said. One resident on the 21st floor of the 24-floor building resisted being evacuated.

Fruetel said at a briefing that the fire had a "pretty good head start" by the time firefighters were called about 4 a.m. "It had been burning for a while," he said.

Firefighters experienced heavy fire and high heat on the 14th floor where the victims were found in various units.

"(It was) a very tragic night at the beginning of a holiday weekend," Fruetel said.

The genders and ages of the victims and the conditions of the injured were not immediately known, the chief said. A firefighter was being examined for a minor injury, he said.

The fire was reported to be out as of 5:30 a.m.



Minneapolis firefighters leave after a deadly fire Wednesday at a high-rise apartment building, in background, in Minneapolis.

DAVID JOLAS, (MINN.) STAR TRIBUNE/AP

Police capture Marine deserter wanted in fatal shooting

Associated Press

ROANOKE, Va. — A Marine deserter wanted in the fatal shooting of his mother's boyfriend was captured Wednesday after a weeks-long, multistate search that had schools and neighborhoods on alert in Roanoke, Va.

Michael Alexander Brown, 22, was taken

into custody Wednesday morning in Franklin County, U.S. Marshals Service spokeswoman Nikki Credic-Barrett said.

Brown is charged with second-degree murder in the Nov. 9 killing of a man described as his mother's boyfriend. The Franklin County Sheriff's Office has said a motive is unclear.

The Marine's mother told investigators she

saw her son kill Rodney Wilfred Brown at a home in Hardy, Va., according to a criminal complaint filed in U.S. District Court.

She also identified the getaway vehicle, which was later found in South Carolina, hours southwest of Camp Lejeune in North Carolina, where her son had been stationed.

'INFDL' plate at heart of lawsuit

By MIKE STUNSON

Lexington (Ky.) Herald-Leader

LEXINGTON, Ky. — Shaun DeWaters took pride in being called an infidel while serving in the Iraq War, but the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet says he cannot display the term on his license plate, according to a lawsuit filed Monday.

DeWaters was required by the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet to turn in his personalized plate with the letters "INFDL." Now, the Boone County man is suing the state's Transportation Cabinet in federal court, claiming the cabinet is violating his free speech rights.

A year after DeWaters was honorably discharged from the Marines in June 2006, he obtained the state's Iraq Marine veteran plate. He had the plate for more than 12 years until he bought a new car this fall, the lawsuit said.

DeWaters planned to transfer his plate. But an email from the Division of Motor Vehicle Licensing, which is in the Transportation Cabinet, said the plate no longer conformed to a Kentucky statute. That law says a personalized plate should not discriminate, represent a political belief or promote a specific faith, religion or anti-religion.

In an unsuccessful attempt to overturn the DMV decision without going to court, DeWaters said he felt his free speech rights were violated.

"The term Infidel has a totally other meaning to me being a disabled Marine Corps combat veteran," DeWaters explained, according to the lawsuit. "It has been well documented in the media and literature that the insurgency in Iraq and Afghanistan called American troops infidels. We actually took it as a badge of honor that our enemy had given us this nickname."

He was ordered to relinquish his plate by Nov. 1. DeWaters told the transportation cabinet that it discriminated against him, and the lawsuit claims he never received an explanation of why his plate represented a religious, anti-religious or political view.

DeWaters said he did not intend for the plate to offend anyone; the word "Infidel" also is tattooed on his arm.

"I've never had anybody ever confront me about the plate being bad," he said. "I've had many veterans give me a thumbs-up, telling me it's the best plate they've ever seen."

NATION

Crusader for the kittens

Army veteran's mission: Find homes for the most vulnerable

BY ANNA MARIE LUX*The Janesville (Wis.) Gazette*

JANESVILLE, Wis. — An-
gela Kadlec cradled a tiny kitten belly-down in her hand while feeding the hungry baby formula in a syringe.

The orphan was found outside in the freezing cold with its eyes still closed and an umbilical cord attached.

While nurturing the wide-eyed youngster, Kadlec, an Army veteran, talked on the phone, offering reassurance to someone who had just adopted an older kitten.

On a recent Saturday morning, Kadlec and a handful of volunteers at Kadlec Ranch Rescue fed cats, cleaned cages and offered ample attention to mewling moms and growing kids.

Later, the all-cat rescue west of Janesville opened its doors to a steady stream of people. The goal was to find homes for adults and dozens of kittens raised in volun-

teer foster homes.

The nonprofit rescue cares for orphaned or abandoned kittens, pregnant moms, moms with litters, and cats and kittens that need socialization. They take in kittens from humane shelters around the state and northern Illinois.

"We specialize in kittens that humane societies generally euthanize because they don't have the resources to care for them," Kadlec told The Janesville Gazette. "That's where we step in."

This year, the rescue has tripled its reach.

Kadlec expects to surpass 1,000 kittens and moms, up from 375 in 2018.

At the end of October, the rescue had taken in 777 cats, which included 552 kittens younger than 5 months old.

To date, 419 have been adopted.

Eleven adults and 119 kittens are still at the rescue or in foster care.

Kadlec works full time as a radiology tech at Madison's University of Wisconsin-Veterinary Hospital.

Getting up before dawn, she dedicates hours every day to her passion for saving animals.

Why? "Because there is a need," she said.

Kadlec is not paid for her efforts. Nor does she have a set fee for adoption. But her kittens are not free.

She asks people wishing to adopt an animal to make a donation, taking into account that the rescue already has invested a minimum of \$70 per cat for neutering or spaying and vaccinations. The amount does not include food, litter, housing and emergency expenses.

Until recently, Kadlec's rescue was totally funded by donations. Collins Aerospace of Rockford, Ill., has awarded the rescue one of its first grants for \$3,000. The Collins mini grant will be used to buy more live traps and to make improvements for the kittens.

Kadlec takes rescue cats to Precision Veterinary in Madison for spaying and neutering. She also traps and neuters feral cats to keep them from reproducing several times a year. No animal leaves the rescue unless it has been spayed or neutered and has received the appropriate vaccinations.

"There should be no excuse not to spay or neuter a cat," she said.

Kadlec grew up in rescue work and volunteered for a rescue before starting her own. She began Kadlec Ranch Rescue in 2007 when Kadlec and her husband bought a small farm. The rescue obtained its nonprofit status in 2016.

Kadlec is determined to save and improve the lives of many animals.

"I grew up with the mentality that you help where you can," she said.

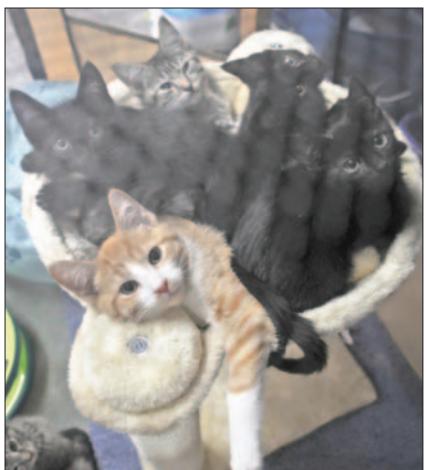
Kadlec has seen many kittens too sick and too frail to survive. In the aftermath, she and other volunteers know how important it is to take care of themselves.

"Burnout is a real thing in rescue work," Kadlec said. "You need to be able to say 'no,' and you need to know your limits and boundaries."

Kristine Heckman, vice president of the rescue, worked in finance her entire life before retiring. She used her business savvy and organizational skills to develop a database to track every animal and adoption. She also screens people who want to adopt a kitten or cat and is involved in fundraising.

Heckman has fostered more than 400 kittens and said she has thousands of kitten photos on her phone.

"I have a room specially built at my house for the kittens," she said. "I seem to get the big litters. It's extremely fulfilling to me."



PHOTOS BY ANTHONY WAHL, THE JANESEVILLE (WIS.) GAZETTE/AP

Five kittens lounge at Kadlec Ranch Rescue near Janesville, Wis. At the end of October, the rescue had taken in 777 cats including 552 kittens younger than 5 months old; 419 have been adopted.



Elyse Duhr, left, gets a little help from her boyfriend's mother, Nancy Diester, while looking for a cat to adopt at Kadlec Ranch Rescue.



LAURA SEITZ, THE DESERET NEWS/AP

A warning sign and a police officer's vehicle are shown at Walt Gilmore's home in North Salt Lake, Utah, in March. U.S. prosecutors allege that Loren Okamura, who was arrested last week in Hawaii, sent hundreds of unwanted service providers to Gilmore's home.

Man arrested in Hawaii in a case of 'extreme' stalking

Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — U.S. prosecutors have arrested a Hawaii man they accuse of sending hundreds of unwanted service providers and others to a Utah home, including plumbers and prostitutes.

Loren Okamura was arrested Friday in Hawaii following his indictment last month on charges of cyberstalking, interstate threats and transporting people for prostitution, court documents show.

Okamura, 44, targeted Walt Gilmore and his adult daughter, sending the woman threatening messages and posting her picture and address online, authorities said. One posting said the homeowner wanted drugs and prostitutes at the house in a quiet, middle-class neighborhood in a Salt Lake City suburb.

The Gilmore family was "tormented" during the year-plus that the "extreme cyberstalking" endured, U.S. Attorney John Huber said Tuesday at a news conference.

Investigators had been focused on Okamura as the suspect since January when the Gilmores were granted a protective injunction in Utah. It took investigators time to gather enough evidence to charge Okamura because of his use of encryption and apps that made him appear anonymous, Huber said.

"For all the good that technology offers us in our modern lifestyles, there is also a darker, seedier side to it," Huber said. "That's what you have here."

Huber declined to disclose the relationship between the victim and Okamura, but said it was not random. He noted that most stalkers had a previous intimate relationship with their victims and said, "those dynamics are present in this case."

A sealed indictment was issued on Oct. 2, but Okamura wasn't arrested until Friday as police

struggled to find him because he doesn't have a permanent address or job and is "savvy" with technology he used to mask his phone's location.

A team of Utah officers flew to Honolulu and teamed with FBI agents on a 15-hour search Friday for Okamura that ended when they arrested him without incident at a supermarket, said Sgt. Jeff Plank, of the Utah Department of Public Safety, who was assigned to the FBI's cybercrime task force.

Okamura's federal public defender, Sharron Rancourt, didn't immediately return a phone message and emails seeking comment.

Okamura was scheduled to be in court in Hawaii on Wednesday for a detention hearing.

Prosecutors say Okamura's online stalking began sometime in 2018 and led as many as 500 unwanted people to go to the house, according to Gilmore. Okamura sent food deliveries, repair services, tow trucks, locksmiths, plumbers and prostitutes to "harrass and intimidate" the family, costing the service providers thousands of dollars in lost business, according to the charging documents. Utah police went to the North Salt Lake house more than 80 times over a four-month period from November 2018 to February 2019.

Okamura sent the woman extensive and repeated texts and voicemails. In May, the woman received a threatening email telling her she should "sleep with one eye open and keep looking over her shoulder." The email told her, "You should just kill yourself and do your family a favor," charging documents show.

Prosecutors say they have records from Okamura's cellphone and Apple ID to support the charges. His arrest was first reported by Hawaii News Now.

WORLD

Thousands rally in support of Israeli leader

BY ARON HELLER
Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel — Thousands of people rallied in support of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday in what was intended to be a show of strength for the Israeli leader as he battles a corruption indictment and a possible rebellion within his own party.

While the demonstration has no impact on the legal charges, a strong turnout could give Netanyahu a boost in terms of public opinion and against potential rivals in his Likud party as the country appears to be heading toward new elections. Netanyahu has claimed that he is the victim of an attempted "coup" by overzealous police investigators and prosecutors.

As the protest got underway in central Tel Aviv, a crowd of roughly 5,000 people rallied for Netanyahu, hoisting Israeli flags



ODD DIALY/AP

Supporters of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu cheer during a rally in Tel Aviv, Israel, on Tuesday.

and posters that accused prosecutors of "blackmail" and "threats." In a possible sign of trouble for Netanyahu, most of Likud's senior officials skipped the event.

Netanyahu ally Micky Zohar,

one of the few Likud officials to attend, took to the stage to criticize the country's legal system.

He said the goal of the demonstration was not to "attack" the legal system, drawing boos from

the crowd. "We can't replace the system, but we can change it," he said.

Culture Minister Miri Regev, another Netanyahu backer, said the protest aimed to "convey a message that the rule of law isn't above the law."

With Israel facing a potential third election in less than a year, Netanyahu is seeking to put down any potential rebellion in Likud by rallying his hard-line base of nationalist and religious voters.

Despite calls for his resignation, Netanyahu seems determined to cling to power and fight the charges from the prime minister's office.

Only one top official, Gideon Saar, is openly challenging the prime minister, but the silence of others is raising speculation that Netanyahu's support could be cracking.

The prime minister has been lashing out at police and prosecutors since Israel's attorney general

al on Nov. 21 indicted Netanyahu on fraud, breach of trust and bribery charges.

His backers have already staged small demonstrations supporting him, but Tuesday night's event appeared to be aimed at stirring dissent in the party's ranks. Netanyahu was not expected to attend the event, which included representatives of fringe right-wing groups.

Speaking at a conference Tuesday, Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit, who was appointed by Netanyahu, appeared to take aim at the prime minister's attacks on the legal system.

The fact that prosecutors "are traveling with security guards just because they fulfilled their duties is unacceptable," he said. Without mentioning Netanyahu, the attorney general called it "outrageous" that there have been "threats" and "baseless slander" directed at law enforcement following the indictment last week.



JAMIL AL-JURANI/AP

Protesters set fires to close streets and bridges during ongoing protests in Basra, Iraq, on Wednesday.

More Iraqi protesters killed, wounded

Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Six protesters were killed by security forces who fired live rounds in Baghdad and southern Iraq amid ongoing violence and days of sit-ins and road closures, Iraqi officials said Wednesday.

Two protesters were killed and 35 wounded when security forces fired live rounds to disperse them from Baghdad's historic Rasheed Street, security and hospital officials said.

The street, which is adjacent to the strategic Al-Ahrar bridge, has been the focus of violence for a full week, with near daily incidents of deaths as a result of security forces using live ammunition

and tear gas to repel demonstrators from advancing beyond a concrete barrier. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity in line with regulations.

Demonstrations have raged in Baghdad and across the mostly Shiite southern Iraq since Oct. 1. The protesters accuse the Shiite-led government of being hopelessly corrupt and complain of poor public services and high unemployment.

At least 350 people have been killed and thousands wounded in what has become the largest grassroots protest movement in Iraq's modern history.

Protesters are occupying three key bridges in central Baghdad — Jumhuriya, Al-Ahrar and Sinar — in

a standoff with security forces. On Wednesday, they also burned tires on Al-Ahrar Bridge to block security forces from accessing the area.

In Karbala, four protesters were killed by live fire from security forces in the previous 24 hours.

Three of the anti-government protesters were killed when security forces fired live rounds to disperse crowds in the holy city of Karbala late Tuesday, security and medical officials said. One protester died of wounds suffered when a tear gas canister struck him in clashes earlier in the day. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity in line with regulations.

In his comments reported by state media, Khamenei said the Iranian people extinguished "a very dangerous deep conspiracy that cost so much money and effort." He praised the police, the Guard and the Basij for "entering the field and carrying out their task in a very difficult confrontation."

Khamenei described the protests as being orchestrated by Iranian media, he said, without offering a casualty figure.

The gasoline price increase came as Iran's 80 million people have already seen their savings dwindle and jobs scarce under crushing U.S. sanctions.

"We have individuals who were killed by knives, shotguns and fires," he said, without offering a casualty figure.

The gasoline price increase came as Iran's 80 million people have already seen their savings dwindle and jobs scarce under crushing U.S. sanctions.

Iran's supreme leader claims protests are a US-backed 'conspiracy'

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Iran's supreme leader on Wednesday claimed without evidence that recent protests across the Islamic Republic over government-set gasoline prices rising were part of a "conspiracy" involving the U.S., as authorities began to acknowledge the scale of the demonstrations.

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei made the comment while addressing members of the Revolutionary Guard's all-volunteer Basij force, which helped put down the demonstrations.

Meanwhile, one lawmaker was quoted as saying authorities arrested more than 7,000 people over the protests while a security official claimed demonstrators attempted to take over Iranian state television.

Iran's government still hasn't offered any statistics on injuries, arrests or deaths in the protests and security crackdown that followed government-set gasoline prices rising Nov. 15. Amnesty International says it believes the violence killed at least 143 people, something Iran disputes without offering any evidence to support its claims.

In his comments reported by state media, Khamenei said the Iranian people extinguished "a very dangerous deep conspiracy that cost so much money and effort." He praised the police, the Guard and the Basij for "entering the field and carrying out their task in a very difficult confrontation."

Khamenei described the protests as being orchestrated by

"global arrogance," which he uses to refer to the U.S. He described America as seeing the price increases as an "opportunity" to bring their "troops" to the field but the "move was destroyed by people."

Wednesday marked the 40th anniversary of the creation of the Basij. Videos from the protest purport to show plainclothes Basij officials and others on motorcycles beating and detaining protesters.

Meanwhile, the moderate news website Entekhab quoted Hossein Naghavi Hosseini, a member of parliament's national security and foreign policy committee, as saying more than 7,000 people had been arrested in the demonstrations. He did not elaborate.

Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli also claimed in an interview late Tuesday on state television that "some 500 people" tried to storm Iran's state television offices. He did not elaborate and no protests had been previously reported in the northern Tehran neighborhood home to the state broadcaster.

Fazli estimated as many as 200,000 people took part in the demonstrations, higher than previous claims. He said demonstrators damaged over 50 police stations, as well as 34 ambulances, 731 banks and 70 gas stations in the country.

"We have individuals who were killed by knives, shotguns and fires," he said, without offering a casualty figure.

The gasoline price increase came as Iran's 80 million people have already seen their savings dwindle and jobs scarce under crushing U.S. sanctions.

WORLD

Hong Kong police to clear hazardous items from campus

BY EILEEN NG
AND KEN MORITSUGU
Associated Press

HONG KONG — Hong Kong police said Wednesday that they will enter a blockaded university to clear up hazardous material before lifting a 10-day siege after civilian search teams found no evidence of any protesters still holding out.

Police district chief Ho Yung-sing said safety teams comprising explosive disposal experts will move into Polytechnic University on Thursday morning to gather evidence and remove stockpiles of dangerous items including petrol bombs and corrosive liquids.

The decision came after university search teams conducted a second day of combing the trash-littered campus and failed to find anyone left behind, Ho said.

"Our ultimate goal is to restore the safety of the campus and to

reopen the campus as soon as possible," Ho said, adding that university staff will assist in the cleanup.

The university earlier said in a statement that many laboratories and facilities on the campus had been vandalized, and that some chemicals and dangerous goods were missing.

Hardcore protesters occupied the campus nearly two weeks ago after blocking the Cross-Harbour Tunnel and setting toll booths on fire during clashes with police. Some 1,100 protesters have left or were arrested by police.

The tunnel, which links Hong Kong Island to the rest of the city, reopened early Wednesday after a two-week closure, to commuters' relief.

Calls for police to end their siege escalated after the pro-democracy camp won a stunning victory in local elections Sunday, delivering a stinging rebuke to



NG HAN GUAN/AP

University staff members inspect the campus of Polytechnic University in Hong Kong on Wednesday. Police said they would clean up dangerous items before lifting a 10-day siege.

city leader Carrie Lam's tough line on the protests, which are in their sixth month.

Lam has offered no concessions, saying only that she would accelerate dialogue and look for ways to address societal grievances.

A hull in violence that began days before the elections has continued as protesters in the largely leaderless movement weigh their next step amid Lam's refusal to

compromise. Small, peaceful rallies have popped up this week during lunchtime and at night in some areas.

Lam has said the central government in Beijing did not blame her for the election setback, which saw the pro-democracy bloc win control of 17 out of 18 district councils. While it may have reflected unhappiness with the government's handling of the un-

rest, she said Tuesday that it also showed that many people want an end to the violence.

The protests started in June over an extradition bill seen by protesters as an erosion of their freedoms promised when the former British colony returned to Chinese control in 1997. The movement has since expanded into a protest over what they see as Beijing's growing interference in the city.

S. Korean singer's death shines light on dark side of K-pop

BY JUWON PARK
Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — The death of South Korean singer and actress Goo Hara, whose body was found at her home in Seoul this week, has again shone a spotlight on pressures that stars, especially females, face in the cutthroat K-pop industry and in deeply conservative South Korean society.

Goo's death at age 28 came less than two months after the death of Choi Jin-ri, and Sulli, another K-pop star and Goo's close friend. Experts say both Goo and Choi faced extensive cyberbullying and sexual harassment from the public and media throughout their careers, which took a toll on their mental health.

Police say they are still investigating Goo's death and found a "pessimistic note" at her home.

Once popular mostly in Asia, K-pop has spread far beyond South Korea, thanks to wildly popular groups such as BTS and Blackpink.

Goo debuted in 2008 as part of the five-member girl group Kara, which shot almost immediately to fame and helped pioneer the K-pop global phenomenon.

She later launched a successful solo career in South Korea and Japan.

Sulli began her career around the same time as Goo, debuting as a member of the girl band f(x) in 2009. She also had multiple acting roles after stepping away from her singing career.

Goo made headlines when she took her former boyfriend, Choi Jong-bum, to court



CHUNG SUNG-JUN/AP

A South Korean man pays tribute to K-pop star Goo Hara at a memorial altar at the Seoul St. Mary's Hospital in Seoul, South Korea, on Monday. Hara was found dead at her home Sunday, police said.

last year. Choi claimed to have been assaulted by her, while Goo accused him of threatening to release a sex video of her.

During the dispute, Goo's Korean agency didn't renew her contract. A court sentenced Choi to 1 1/2 years in prison on charges of coercion and assaulting and blackmailing Goo. The jail term was suspended, keeping him out of prison. Choi appealed and the trial is still ongoing.

K-pop is highly competitive, with doz-

ens of groups debuting each year. Industry experts have long warned about the dark side of the scandal-ridden industry. Aspiring artists, as young as their early teens, train for years. Only a few debut and even fewer are commercially successful. The likelihood of their success increases if they sign with a handful of top entertainment agencies.

The industry is known to have strict rules for their stars — including strict

ing bans, spartan training and diets, and sometimes slave-like and unfair contracts. Experts say the industry has additional requirements for its female artists, unspoken rules reflective of South Korea's patriarchal society.

Park Hee-A, a K-pop journalist and writer of "Interviews with K-pop Stars," said female stars are bound by rigid societal rules of femininity.

"Some female idol members have gotten ostracized for not smiling in a television show and reading a book about feminism that contradicts male-dominated patriarchal South Korean society," Park told The Associated Press.

Expectations of purity and chastity govern women in South Korea. Goo faced a barrage of hate comments following media reports about the sex video despite her being the victim of revenge porn.

"The topic of sex is taboo in South Korea compared to western countries," said Tae-Sung Yeum, attending psychiatrist at Gwanghwamun Forest Psychiatric Clinic. "There's a high moral standard required, especially for female celebrities, because South Korea is a patriarchal society."

Sulli, Goo's long-time friend, also made headlines, often malicious and misogynistic, for speaking out about subjects such as ageism and feminism. She was criticized for not wearing a bra, calling older male colleagues by their first names and openly supporting feminism.

When Sulli was found dead in her Seongnam home, Goo bid farewell to her friend in a live-streamed video. "I will live more diligently for you," Goo said, crying as she apologized for not being able to make it to her funeral.

Two days before Goo's death, she uploaded a final selfie on her Instagram with the caption, "Good night."

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Police free dog from clutches of vacuum

MO BALLWIN — Police in a suburban St. Louis community were called to free a small dog from the clutches of an automated vacuum cleaner.

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported that Ballwin officers received a call that the vacuum had sucked up the tail of a Shih Tzu mix dog as it napped.

Police spokesman Mike Burgoyne said that when officers arrived they could hear a dog yelping, a woman screaming and a newborn baby crying.

The officers cut off the dog's tail to free it from the Roomba's grip. Burgoyne said the dog was shaken but not injured.

Goats recruited for landscaping work

FL TITUSVILLE — A Florida school district is bringing in a crack squad of four-legged experts to deal with an overgrown patch of rough terrain where hidden gopher tortoises, snakes, steep banks and vertical drop-offs make it too hazardous for grounds crews to handle.

Florida Today reported about two dozen goats will descend into a fenced area around a pond next to Imperial Estates Elementary in Titusville.

Gounds services supervisor Matt Nolle said the area is too dangerous for heavy equipment or even people on foot. Goats are better for the environment and can get into places humans can't.

Horse gets stuck in barn's hayloft

SC LORIS — A farm animal with unbridled ambition in South Carolina has given new meaning to the phrase "get off your high horse."

Horry County Fire Rescue workers said they called to a barn in Loris, where a horse somehow managed to leave its stall and climb into a hayloft.

They had to bring in heavy equipment, and large-animal veterinarians helped sedate the horse before it was lowered to the ground on a makeshift platform.

Rescue workers still haven't figured out how the horse managed to climb a narrow set of stairs into the loft.

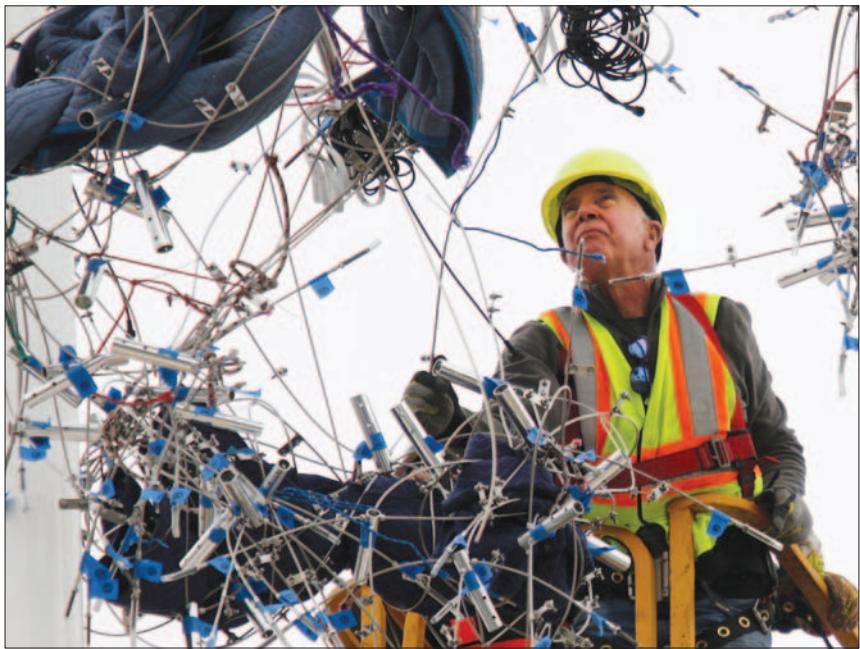
Man accused of filming girls through hole in wall

WV MORGANTOWN — A West Virginia man was accused of filming two girls through a hole in a bathroom wall.

The Exponent Telegram reported Oliver Wayne Matheny, 45, was arrested and charged with felony use of minors in filming of sexually explicit conduct.

Monongalia County Sheriff Perry Palmer said Matheny is accused of filming the girls without their knowledge or consent in September 2018. It's unclear what led authorities to Matheny.

The West Virginia State Police website said Matheny is a registered sex offender who was con-



BEN POWELL, ODESSA (TEXAS) AMERICAN/AP

Getting things in order

Light fixtures are lowered while Ray King, the artist who designed the spire, looks to make sure that everything is in place as the top portion of the spire's lights are installed in Odessa, Texas, on Monday. When completed, the spire will be over 109 feet tall and contain programmable color LED lights that can be changed, Odessa American reported.

victed in 1993 of a sex offense against a child in Florida.

THE CENSUS

Man uses ornament to stop dog attack

OH CANTON — An Ohio man repeatedly hit a dog with a nutcracker Christmas decoration to stop its attack on a 10-year-old neighbor, police said.

Leonard Miller, 88, of Perry Township, struck the animal multiple times until it let go of the child. The Canton Repository reported. The girl was transported to a hospital with severe injuries to her left arm, police said.

Miller said his 13-year-old neighbor knocked on his door and told him that a dog at their home was attacking her younger sister.

Miller said he rushed out the door and grabbed a nutcracker outside his neighbor's home, which he used to hit the dog in the back.

When the dog released the child, Miller locked it in the house. He took the girls back to his home and called an ambulance.

Washed-up sea turtles headed for safety

MA QUINCY — The New England Aquarium said 45 endangered sea turtles

\$11K

The approximate worth of fur coats stolen from Connecticut store.

Officers responded to a report of a theft in progress at Albe Furs in Westport where men reportedly grabbed at least two coats and fled in a car. Police said another local business reported

that they believe the same suspects had been in their store the previous day asking about fur coats. Police are searching for three suspects in the theft.

that were stranded on Cape Cod are headed for Georgia and Florida.

The aquarium said the turtles were medically stabilized before being flown south with a volunteer. The facility said the transfer of the turtles is important to make room at its sea turtle hospital in Quincy.

The turtles are Kemp's ridley and loggerheads. They are slated to finish rehabilitating at the Georgia Sea Turtle Center and Gulf World Marine Park in Panama City, Fla.

Volunteers fly deformed pig to animal hospital

VA DANVILLE — A deformed baby pig that was born on a farm in Virginia was flown to a veterinary hospital in Pennsylvania for medical treatment.

The Danville Register & Bee reported the black female pig named

Hope was born with deformed rear legs on a farm near the western Virginia town of Floyd.

The 3-week-old pig was set to be euthanized. But Ziggy's Refuge Farm Sanctuary in nearby Providence, N.C., adopted her.

Volunteers flew Hope on a private plane to the New Bolton Center at the University of Pennsylvania's School of Veterinary Medicine in Kennett Square outside Philadelphia on Nov. 16. Its staff will determine whether her legs can be repaired.

Police: Towel-clad man found hiding in room

MD COLLEGE PARK — Police in Maryland charged a suspect they said was found hiding in a woman's bedroom closet wearing a towel.

Prince George's County police said in a statement that a woman arrived back at her apartment

and heard a noise coming from her bedroom. The woman told police she opened a closet door to find the man, Eric Tata, 24, hiding in the space with a towel wrapped around his body.

Police said she screamed, and Tata ran away to his nearby apartment where officers later arrested him.

Tata was charged with fourth-degree burglary, trespassing and trespassing related to a peeing Tom offense.

Man drives 125 mph, crashes into trooper

GA ATLANTA — Authorities in Georgia said a man suspected of driving under the influence led officers on a 125 mph chase before crashing into a trooper's cruiser.

Georgia State Patrol told news outlets the chase began when police spotted a Mercedes-Benz going about 50 mph over the speed limit on an Atlanta highway. Authorities said the driver refused to stop for two state troopers.

Patrol spokeswoman Stacey Collins told news outlets the suspect hit one patrol car on its side but another trooper was able to box him in and stop the pursuit. Police said alcohol was likely a factor.

From wire reports

FACES

Host proud of annual dog show's popularity

BY GINA ABDY
Associated Press

Television traditions on Thanksgiving have usually involved the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade and then hours of football, but in recent years, another has emerged: The National Dog Show.

Hosted by actor John O'Hurley, the annual parade of pooches has become one of the most popular shows of Thanksgiving week.

But according to O'Hurley, it almost didn't make its way to the small screen.

As O'Hurley tells it, the then-head of NBC Sports was enamored with the dog show parody classic "Best in Show" and came up with the idea to do a real show to fill the gap between the parade and football.

"They have all laughed him out of the office. But by the end of the day, he had the National Dog Show license from the Kennel Club of Philadelphia, (and) Purina had come on as a presenting sponsor," O'Hurley recalled. "He called me and I was in L.A. I picked up the phone and I said, 'Hello.' And he said, 'Woof, Woof.' And that's how it all started 18 years ago."

For O'Hurley, best known for his time on "Seinfeld," it was a natural fit.

"Well, I've had a dog ever since I was 4 years old in my lap," said O'Hurley. "I always said I'm a better person with a dog in my lap; dogs have a tendency to round out the edges in our lives."

O'Hurley is joined by Johnny Weir and Tara Lipinski, the figure skating commentary duo known for their dose of camp, and sports commentator Mary Carillo. David Frei, who is a licensed judge for the American Kennel Club, serves as the analyst.

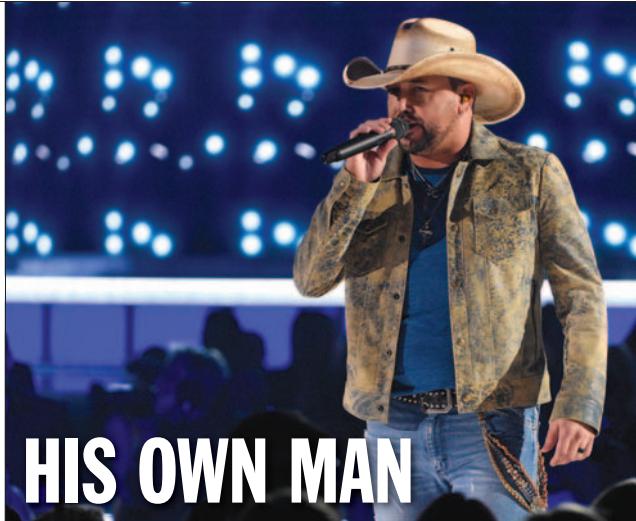
"(There's) enough money that the team has grown ... We want to create more of an entertainment spectacle around a dog show. We want to create the feeling of, 'It's fun.' And dogs are fun."

The two-hour, pre-recorded show will air Nov. 29 on AFN-Family.



BILL McCAY, NBC/AP

David Frei, left, and host John O'Hurley pose with a Havanese dog at The National Dog Show in Philadelphia. The show gets some of the highest ratings on Thanksgiving statewide.



HIS OWN MAN

Jason Aldean says owning his records was a priority

BY KRISTIN M. HALL
Associated Press

Country star Jason Aldean learned the hard lessons about the music business when he first signed a record deal with Capitol Records that ended up never producing any music. Years later, he signed to Broken Bow, a Nashville-based indie label that has gone on to release all nine of Aldean's records, six of which have been certified platinum or multiplatinum.

"I got kicked around in the music business pretty good early on and learned a lot," said Aldean, whose new record, the appropriately titled "9," came out Nov. 22. "Broken Bow giving me an opportunity to do what I've done over the years and giving me a chance to have a career means a lot."

Two years ago, the German-based BMG bought BBR Music Group, which includes Broken Bow, and Aldean this year signed a new global distribution and marketing deal with BMG, a big step for Aldean who was already one of country music's most downloaded artists.

In many ways, Aldean has become the face of the label and is invested in its success, which now includes artists like Dustin Lynch, Runaway June, Lindsay Ell, Jimmie Allen, Zac Brown Band, Trace Adkins and Kid Rock. Recently named artist of the decade by the Academy of Country Music, he's sold nearly 12 million albums in the U.S. alone, had more than 20 No. 1 singles and filled arenas and stadiums along the way. He also has his own imprint at the label, where he has signed and released music from Tyler Farr.

Now with BMG's support, Aldean and the rest of BBR Music Group's artists have greater access to an international audience for country music that has been growing, said Jon Loba, executive vice president, recorded music at BMG Nashville.

"In the next year, you're going to see some really big picture initiatives specific to Aldean that will not only advance his career overseas, but the genre as a whole," said Loba. "We're trying as a company not to just elevate our artists in other territories, but the entire genre."

"I think that's something every artist would like to have," Aldean said. "It kind of opens you up to a whole new world."

Aldean discussed owning his music, a hot topic in Nashville lately during the public feud between Taylor Swift and Nashville-based Big Machine Label Group, which owns her first six records. The three-time ACM entertainer of the year told The Associated Press that was a priority in his last contract negotiations.

"When I reddid my record deal a few records back, when I upped with Broken Bow for the first time, that was a big point for me," Aldean said. "I wanted to own my own stuff. And then when I just re-upped again, I wanted to own more of it."

Loba declined to discuss specifics of Aldean's contract, but acknowledged he was getting strong offers from their competitors.

"We were happy to deliver in this instance on the things that were important to him because he is so incredibly important to us," Loba said.

"Those are our paintings, you know," Aldean said. "That's our piece of art. And the record companies, I feel like, we both did well. I made these records. They profited a lot off it and got that initial stuff off it. At some point, I want that stuff back and to be able to leave it to my family."

But Aldean also feels a loyalty to his label, which has trusted him to be his own A&R guy, essentially picking out his songs and singles with his longtime producer Michael Knox. Luckily, he has other country artists bringing him songs, such as Tyler Hubbard of Florida Georgia Line, who co-wrote his driving, country rock single "We Back." Morgan Wallen, who is opening for Aldean next year, co-wrote "Keeping It Small Town" and Brantley Gilbert co-wrote "The Same Way," both songs that Aldean felt fit his style of arena country rock.

"I feel like whenever we go into the studio and start recording, it's almost like a lot of these guys start writing specifically for us, for our record, which is cool," Aldean said.

Even as the music industry moves more and more to a singles-driven approach, Aldean still sees the value in a full 16-song album.

"I feel like it's really hard for a fan to get an idea of who an artist is by listening to one song every few months," Aldean said.

Jason Aldean, shown April 7 at the Academy of Country Music Awards in Las Vegas, has released his ninth studio album with Broken Bow, appropriately titled "9."

CHRIS PIZZELLO, INVISION/AP

Nancy Grace to stream 'Crime Stories' series

Former CNN mainstay Nancy Grace is signing up for a crime show on Fox Nation, an illustration of how Fox News' streaming service has evolved counter to expectations one year into operation.

Cameras will show her delivering her podcast and SiriusXM radio show, "Crime Stories with Nancy Grace," five days a week. The program is modeled after her popular television series that ran on the HLN network for many years.

"We spotlight breaking crime and justice news, help find missing people, especially children, solve unsolved homicides and analyze clues left behind," Grace said.

Fox Nation, the streaming service available for \$65 a year, will begin offering "Crime Stories" in January.

Showtime plans series on gossip Cindy Adams

Showtime will be putting the spotlight on Cindy Adams, the New York Post columnist and elder stateswoman of Manhattan gossip.

Adams, 89, will be the subject of a documentary series in 2021 with Brian Grazer and Ron Howard executive producing.

At the height of her career, Adams wrote six columns a week for the Post, appeared four times a week on New York's WNBC-TV, and made stops on "Geraldo" and "E!" She's known for the phrase: "Only in New York, kids, only in New York."

Adams was a founding member of the TV hit "A Current Affair," and her books include "The Gift of Jazzy."

T.I. apologizes, says he was joking

Rapper T.I. says he was joking when he said he goes to the gynecologist with his now-18-year-old daughter every year to make sure her hymen is "still intact."

The performer, who received backlash when the comments went viral this month, told Jada Pinkett-Smith on Monday's episode of "Red Table Talk" that he also apologized to his daughter.

Says T.I.: "I began to embellish and exaggerate, and I think a lot of people kind of took it extremely literal."

Other news

■ British theater director and presenter Jonathan Miller, the star of the "Beyond the Fringe" comedy revue, died Wednesday. He was 85. Miller's family said he had suffered from Alzheimer's disease. One of the country's most important figures in the arts, Miller enjoyed a decades-long career that encompassed theater, television and opera.

From The Associated Press



Grace



Adams,

in 2006



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BY ARTHUR I. CYR
Special to Stars and Stripes

Thanksgiving means real, not ideological, inclusiveness. President Abraham Lincoln profoundly demonstrated this fundamental point. On Oct. 3, 1863, the White House issued the Thanksgiving Proclamation, declaring the last Thursday of November to be a "day of thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens." He also humbly requested "the interposition of the Almighty Hand to heal the wounds of the nation and to restore ... peace, harmony, and Union."

Earlier, Lincoln had ordered government offices closed on Nov. 28, 1861, for a day of thanksgiving. Up until the 1863 proclamation, individual states had celebrated days of giving thanks. Sarah Josepha Hale, editor of the influential *Godey's Lady's Book*, had written to Lincoln in late September of that year pressing for a national day of thanks, a goal she pursued for many years without success.

According to Lincoln's administrative aide John Nicolay, Secretary of State William H. Seward signed the document. Lincoln and Seward by then were friends as well as colleagues.

Unity was an overarching Lincoln theme throughout the Civil War, employed with shrewd calculation and brilliant political timing. By the fall of 1863, the strategic position of the Union had taken a marked turn for the better. In July, there were two significant victories — the Battle of Gettysburg in Pennsylvania and the capture of Vicksburg, Miss. A sizable Confederate

army never again would invade the North, and the great Mississippi River was now completely in Union control.

During the preceding year, one military development provided Lincoln with a political opportunity. On Sept. 17, 1862, the Army of the Potomac, under Gen. George B. McClellan, defeated Gen. Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia at Antietam Creek in Maryland. The victory was technical, in that Lee withdrew and left the Union forces in control. Nevertheless, the outcome qualified as a Union military success despite the terrible losses.

Lincoln faced extremely serious challenges beyond the Confederacy. McClellan was popular with rank-and-file soldiers; he also held national political ambitions. He was committed to the Union but strongly opposed abolition of slavery. A talented organizer and administrator, he was believed to be aggressive in attacking Lee's army.

McClellan became insubordinate, demanding control over all war policy. The president fired him. McClellan became the Democratic Party's 1864 presidential nominee; Lincoln defeated him again.

Lincoln's skill at civil-military management was not limited to outmaneuvering McClellan. The president was instrumental in identifying and elevating promising Union commanders. The case of Gen. Ulysses S. Grant is especially notable. This commander was persistent and determined in seeking victory, as viewed by many, but also much more. Grant had remarkable talent for inspiring cohesion and imposing effective organization, demonstrated early in the war in command of a company of volunteers. His skill at maneuver

and speed in ensuring implementation of orders were equally impressive. The complaint that Grant was a "butcher" of men is unfair and untrue, and reflects the terrible strains of the war.

Lincoln, after confirming control of the Army, moved quickly to exploit the Antietam victory by issuing the Emancipation Proclamation. The executive order of Jan. 1, 1863, freed slaves in the Confederate states. From the fall of 1862, the U.S. government issued a series of warnings under the Second Confiscation Act, confirmed by Congress on July 17, 1862. The legislation confirmed in law Lincoln's War Powers.

Critics have argued Lincoln should have included states in the Union, but that would have been illegal and unwise. Slavery was still legal under the Constitution, and it ended in law only when a sufficient number of states ratified the 13th Amendment to the Constitution, announced Dec. 18, 1865. Slavery had support in border states and parts of the North.

By design, the Emancipation Proclamation is a detailed, dry document that makes the case for removing property, with emphasis on procedure. There is no reference to fundamental moral concerns expressed elsewhere, especially in Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and Second Inaugural.

Immediately, Civil War goals changed from only restoring the Union to abolition of slavery. Lincoln used practical means for transcendent goals, with astonishing political skill.

Given thanks.

Arthur I. Cyr is Clausen Distinguished Professor at Carthage College and author of "After the Cold War."

Whoever succeeds Trump will struggle to unify nation

BY CARL P. LEUBSDORF
The Dallas Morning News

Amid heated exchanges over "Medicare for All" and the need to appeal to all factions of their diverse party, most Democratic candidates have also looked ahead to what might be the next president's biggest challenge.

"The next president will inherit a divided nation, and a divided world," former Vice President Joe Biden told a recent *Des Moines Register* town hall. "It's going to require someone who can unify this nation." "I'm planning to be the president who can turn the page and unify a dangerously polarized country while tackling those issues that are going to be just as urgent then as they are now," South Bend, Ind., Mayor Pete Buttigieg said in last month's Ohio debate.

"We... need someone who can unify the party and the country and who has the experience of having done that," California Sen. Kamala Harris said in last week's Atlanta debate. "I've done that work."

But reuniting a sharply divided country after the bitterly divisive presidency of Donald Trump — whenever that occurs — will take more than accurate analyses of the problem or optimistic pledges of being up to that task. It will require not only the active bipartisan outreach from the next president but also the buy-in from leaders of whichever party loses the election that elects Trump's successor, whether a Democrat in 2020 or a Republican later on.

History shows how hard it will be to lessen political acrimony and restore at least a semblance of the bipartisanship that once marked foreign policy and, at times, domestic issues.

The most positive modern example came 45 years ago, when the near certainty of impeachment and conviction persuaded Richard Nixon to yield the presidency to his vice president, former House Republi-

can Leader Gerald Ford.

Ford ascended with three advantages. Most important, his accession ensured the 1972 will of the voters would be respected through Nixon's second term.

Second, he was both Nixon's choice (albeit reluctantly) for vice president when Spiro Agnew resigned in 1973 and acceptable to the top congressional Democrats, Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield and House Speaker Carl Albert. They knew Ford well and appreciated his qualities.

Third, Ford set a positive tone from the moment he took the presidential oath and declared, "Our long national nightmare is over." By later pardoning Nixon, Ford ensured that, despite initial partisan criticism, his tenure would focus on the country's current problems, not the divisive, prior presidency.

In time, the onset of the 1976 election ensured the return of partisanship, but it was less acrimonious than it would have been without Ford's positive leadership.

Another period of unity was the 2001 detente between then-President George W. Bush and top Democrats after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. That brief era of good feeling ended when Bush invaded Iraq and many Democrats resisted.

But an opportunity was missed after Barack Obama, benefitting from divisions over the Iraq War and a sharp economic downturn, won the 2008 election with an optimistic message, a solid electoral majority and control of both houses of Congress. Obama didn't always adhere to his promises to set a new tone. And Republicans embraced opposition from the outset, resisting a needed measure to stimulate a recession-ridden economy and Obama's landmark health care plan, though both contained GOP elements.

Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell pressured GOP colleagues against cooperating and proclaimed Obama's defeat his main four-year objective. Though

the Kentucky senator failed, Obama's tenure became increasingly partisan, in part because Republicans regained the House, and later the Senate, and in part because he often used executive authority to surround congressional gridlock.

Obama's successor, Trump, made no pretense of bipartisanship, making clear from the outset he would govern to please the minority of Americans who voted for him.

Today, as Trump faces impeachment and possible conviction, there are no Gerald Fords on the horizon. In the unlikelihood of Senate conviction, he would be succeeded by the ideologically rigid Mike Pence, who has spent three years as a Trump apologist.

Other more likely options are hardly more promising. A second Trump term would presumably mirror and perhaps exacerbate the divisions of his first. A narrow Democratic victory could find governing difficult, especially with a GOP Senate unconvincing Trump's course was wrong.

Perhaps only the unlikely result of a big Democratic victory that included the Senate would convince enough Republicans to forsake all-out opposition, a prospect Biden repeatedly suggests could achieve.

Most importantly, any victorious Democrat or post-Trump Republican would have to put actions behind promises of unity and show willingness for compromise. Centrist hopefuls like Biden, Buttigieg or Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar would seem better bets than ideological liberals like Sens. Bernie Sanders, of Vermont, or Elizabeth Warren, of Massachusetts.

Still, it's difficult to imagine that any group could mount current divisions. It may require a real domestic or international crisis — and a resulting political shakeup — to force the kind of cooperation that seems so unlikely today.

Carl P. Leubsdorf is a former Washington bureau chief of The Dallas Morning News.

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Federal opioid probe targets Big Pharma



KEITH SHAKOCIC/AP

A federal investigation is targeting companies that make or distribute prescription opioid painkillers, the Wall Street Journal reported.

Associated Press

At least a half-dozen companies that make or distribute prescription opioid painkillers are facing a federal criminal investigation of their roles in a nationwide addiction and overdose crisis.

The Wall Street Journal first reported the investigation Tuesday, citing unnamed sources familiar with the probe.

Many activists have called for drug companies to not only be sued but also face criminal charges. An investigation is a step in that direction, though it is not clear when or whether any criminal charges might be filed.

The newspaper said drugmakers Amneal Pharmaceuticals, Johnson & Johnson, Mallinckrodt and Teva Pharmaceutical Industries had received grand-jury

subpoenas from the U.S. Attorney's Office in Brooklyn, along with drug distributors AmerisourceBergen and McKesson.

Most of the companies have disclosed federal subpoenas related to opioids in filings this year with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

Johnson & Johnson and its subsidiary Janssen said in a statement Tuesday that it understands the request for information is part of a "broader, industry-wide investigation into manufacturers' and distributors' monitoring programs and reporting under the Controlled Substances Act."

Johnson & Johnson and Teva both said in statements that their drug monitoring practices complied with the law.

"In fact, monitoring data shows

that the company's opioids were rarely diverted or abused," Johnson & Johnson said.

All the companies except New Jersey-based generic drugmaker Amneal are also defendants in more than 2,000 civil lawsuits filed by state and local governments alleging their drug promotion and distribution practices contributed to an opioid crisis that has been linked to more than 400,000 deaths in the U.S. since 2000.

The deaths include those related to prescription opioids as well as illegal ones such as heroin and illicitly made fentanyl. One of the key claims in those lawsuits is that companies violated the Controlled Substances Act by failing to report and stop shipments of suspicious drug orders.

In two cases this year, criminal versions of those claims surfaced in cases involving smaller distribution companies. In New York, Rochester Drug Cooperative paid \$20 million and entered into a deferred prosecution agreement. And in Ohio, Miami-Luken and two of its executives face similar charges — which the now-defunct company denies.

The firm most associated with opioids, OxyContin maker Purdue Pharma, has also suggested that it could face federal charges.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (Nov. 29)	\$1,1294
Dollar buys (Nov. 29)	€0,8854
Canadian (Nov. 29)	€1,2232
Japanese yen (Nov. 29)	106,00
South Korean won (DATE)	1,145,50
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0,3770
British pound	1,2875
Canadian (Dollar)	1,3273
Danish (Krona)	0,2020
Denmark (Krone)	6,7929
Egypt (Pound)	16,1499
Finland (Yen)	1,0999
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7,8284
Hungary (Forint)	305,67
Iceland (Yen)	3,4748
Japan (Yen)	109,29
Kuwait (Dinar)	0,3041
Norway (Krone)	9,1759
Poland (Zloty)	56,84
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3,7500
Switzerland (Franc)	1,1677
South Korea (Won)	1,177,97
Thailand (Baht)	30,24
U.K. (Pound)	5,7780
(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities. Commercial rates are those available to the general public for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For example, to convert U.S. dollars to pounds (purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are the bank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to U.S. dollars. The euro is the pound, and the euro, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)	

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	4,75
Discount rate	2,25
Federal funds market rate	1,55
3-month bill	1,55
30-year bond	2,18

FAA says it will handle all approvals for new Max jets

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Federal safety regulators indicated Tuesday that they will keep full control over approvals of each new Boeing 737 Max built since the planes were grounded in March rather than delegating some of the work to Boeing employees.

The Federal Aviation Administration said it told Boeing on Tuesday that the agency will retain all authority to issue safety certificates for newly manufactured Max planes.

Boeing hasn't stopped producing the Max, although it slowed down the assembly line in April. The FAA's announcement doesn't cover planes that were approved before the Max was grounded

following two crashes that killed 436 people.

The FAA decision affects more than 300 finished Max jets currently sitting in storage. Boeing delivered nearly 400 before the Max was grounded.

It is the latest move by the FAA to show its independence from Boeing. Lawmakers have accused the FAA of surrendering too much authority to the aircraft manufacturer in certifying the Max.

Senior FAA officials appeared to know little about a new flight control system on the plane, which played a role in crashes in Indonesia and Ethiopia. The FAA relied on analysis and testing by Boeing employees, whose work was supposed to be overseen by

federal inspectors.

Chicago-based Boeing said recently it expects to resume deliveries to airlines in December and gain final FAA approval in January for U.S. airlines to resume using the plane.

That was met with pushback by the FAA. Earlier this month, FAA Administrator Stephen Dickson said, "There is a lot of pressure to return this aircraft to service quickly."

Dickson has refused to publicly set a date for the plane's return, telling FAA employees to "take the time you need and focus solely on safety." Dickson also hasn't said whether the FAA will go along with Boeing's desire to resume Max deliveries to airlines next month, even before the

FAA approves a new program for training pilots to fly the planes.

A Boeing spokesman, Gordon Johndroe, said Tuesday, "We will continue to work closely with the FAA on the safe return to service of the Max fleet."

MARKET WATCH

Nov. 26, 2019

Dow Jones industrials	55,21
	28,121,68
Nasdaq composite	15,44
	8,647,93
Standard & Poor's 500	6,68
	3,140,52
Russell 2000	2,33
	1,624,23

WEATHER OUTLOOK

THURSDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



THURSDAY IN EUROPE

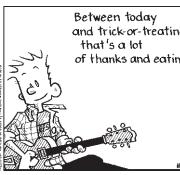


FRIDAY IN THE PACIFIC

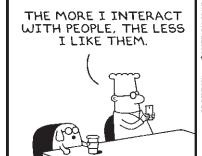


The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

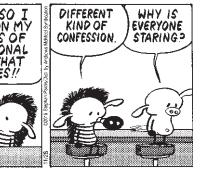
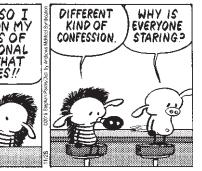
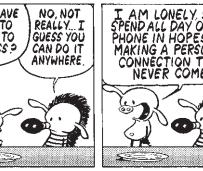
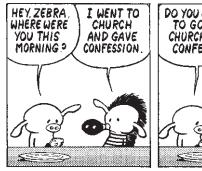
Frazz



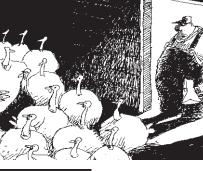
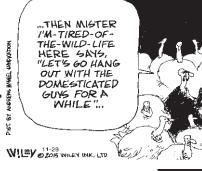
Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



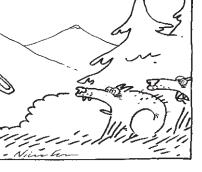
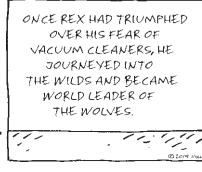
Non Sequitur



Candorville



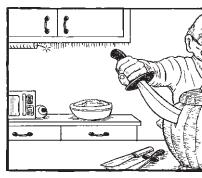
Carpe Diem



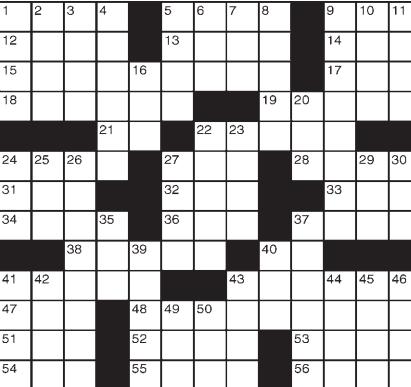
Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



ACROSS

1 Expansive
5 Squad
9 Roman 551
10 Composer
Stravinsky
13 Mentor
14 Always, in verse
15 Over the moon
17 NYC airport
18 Pueblo structures
19 Leek's kin
21 Alien, for short
22 Russian ballet company
24 Clothing
27 Crib
28 Prez's backup
31 Tramcar contents
32 Play a part
33 Old Olds
34 First lady of scat
36 "King Kong" studio
37 Gomer of classic TV
38 Bridge call
40 Pacino of "Serpico"
41 Confronted
43 Parcels of land
47 Actress Thurman
48 "So tasty!"
51 Physician's nickname
52 Panache
53 Fed. agents
54 Parched

DOWN

1 "Livin' La — Loca"
2 On in years
3 Without help
4 Teams on "Survivor"
5 Cries of aversion
6 Fanatic
7 Rage
8 Henry VIII's house
9 Word with express or pizza
10 Toy block name
11 Tehran's country
16 Retrieve
20 Calendar abbr.
22 Jollies

23 Fascinated by
24 Fawn's mama
25 Internet address
26 Choice food
27 Taverns
29 Sushi choice
30 "The Bells" author
35 Chest-beating beast
37 Braids
39 Venomous viper
40 Lob's path
41 Elmer of cartoons
42 Cupid's specialty
43 Metal boxes
44 Prolonged sleep
45 Mon. follower
46 Taxpayer IDs
49 "Evil Woman" band
50 Science room

Answer to Previous Puzzle

C	O	R	E	S	C	I		C	H	A	P
A	B	I	T		O	R	T				
R	I	G	H	T	N	O	W		A	G	E
L	E	G	I	O	N			A	F	G	H
M	A	H						C	E	S	R
P	R	O	B								
S	K	O	A								
T	L	O	G								
S	E										
T	O										
A	R										
Y	E										

11-28

CRYPTOQUIP

A Y J O C S B Z E B B U V M Y

B G O B A T K D D W D Y Q B G S Y V Y Z U

H C Z T R E K R Y Q B J L B Z M Y D T H K W :

K S M K R U G E T Q T R E S B A M T B .

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: THAT WOMAN SIMPLY WOULD NOT STOP BRAGGING ABOUT HER LASHES, SO I SAID "PUT EYELID ON IT!"

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: J equals M



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SCOREBOARD

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NFL

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
New England	10	1	0	.909	300	117
Browns	8	3	0	.727	231	173
N.Y. Jets	5	6	0	.454	232	241
Miami	2	9	0	.188	163	243
	5	10	0	.357	293	226
Houston	7	4	0	.636	265	249
Indianapolis	6	5	0	.545	244	226
Tennessee	6	5	0	.545	245	217
Carolina	4	7	0	.364	228	218
Baltimore	9	2	0	.818	386	202
Pittsburgh	5	7	0	.429	216	212
Cleveland	5	6	0	.455	233	252
Cincinnati	0	9	0	.000	238	247
	5	10	0	.250	273	217
Kansas City	7	4	0	.638	308	256
Denver	6	5	0	.545	245	226
	5	10	0	.250	273	217
NATIONAL CONFERENCE	5	10	0	.357	293	226
	5	10	0	.357	293	226
Dallas	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Philadelphia	6	5	0	.545	247	247
Washington	2	9	0	.188	214	269
	5	10	0	.250	273	226
New Orleans	9	2	0	.818	272	230
Carolina	7	4	0	.636	258	230
Tampa Bay	4	7	0	.364	324	335
Atlanta	3	8	0	.273	242	247
	5	10	0	.250	273	226
Green Bay	8	3	0	.727	258	242
Minnesota	8	3	0	.727	289	205
Chicago	5	6	0	.455	244	226
Buffalo	3	7	0	.318	260	291
	5	10	0	.250	273	226
San Francisco	9	2	0	.909	332	263
Seattle	9	2	0	.818	292	263
L.A. Rams	6	5	0	.545	243	240
Arizona	3	8	0	.273	248	317
	5	10	0	.250	273	226
Thursday, Nov. 21						
Houston vs. Indianapolis	17					
Tampa Bay vs. New Orleans	24					
Tampa Bay 35, Atlanta 22						
Cleveland 19, N.Y. Giants 14						
Seattle 17, Philadelphia 9						
New Orleans 31, Carolina 31						
N.Y. Jets 20, Washington 15						
Buffalo 20, Denver 3						
Washington 19, Detroit 16						
Philadelphia 20, Cincinnati 10						
Tennessee 42, Jacksonville 20						
New England 27, San Francisco 23						
San Francisco vs. Green Bay 8						
Open: Kansas City, L.A. Chargers, Arizona, Minnesota						
Monday, Nov. 25						
Baltimore 45, L.A. Rams 6						
Chicago 24, Detroit 20						
Buffalo at Dallas						
New Orleans vs. Atlanta						
Sunday's games						
Philadelphia at Miami						
Indians 10, N.Y. Yankees 11						
Tennessee at Indianapolis						
Cleveland at Pittsburgh						
Washington at Green Bay						
N.Y. Giants 10, N.Y. Giants 9						
Seattle 17, Philadelphia 9						
New Orleans 31, Carolina 31						
N.Y. Jets 20, Washington 15						
Buffalo 20, Denver 3						
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Monday, Nov. 25				</		

NBA/NHL

NHL roundup

Kahkonen saves 32, helps Wild top Devils

Associated Press

NEWARK, N.J. — The Minnesota Wild finally found a way to hold a third-period lead, and it came in a game where the referees made Bruce Boudreau's team work a little harder by blowing a call on a goal.

Kaapo Kahkonen made 32 saves in his NHL debut, defenseman Ryan Suter scored the winner early in the third period and the suddenly hot Wild beat the Devils 3-2 on Tuesday night in a game the NHL said New Jersey got credit for a goal that should not have counted.

The controversy centered on Jesper Boqvist's first NHL goal. It tied the score 1-all in the first period and was allowed to stand despite a challenge by Boudreau, who claimed the play should have been blown dead before the goal because Devils forward Wayne Simmonds played the puck with a high stick in center ice and then played it again in the offensive zone without anyone else touching it.

During the third period, the NHL put out a statement saying a mistake was made.

"I didn't need the league to tell me they made a mistake," said Boudreau, whose team blew third-period leads in recent overtime losses to the Bruins and Rangers.

So not only did the Wild lose the challenge, they drew a delay of game penalty.

Boudreau said referee Brad Meier apologized for the mistakes at the start of the second period, and at the end, the Wild were the better team.

Zach Parise and Jordan Greenway also scored as the Wild extended their point streak to seven games (4-0-3) while Kahkonen was solid.

Bruins 8, Canadiens 1: David Pastrnak recorded his second hat trick of the season and Eastern Conference-leading Boston routed host Montreal.

Like DeBrusk, Brad Marchand, Anders Bjork, Charlie Coyle and Danton Heinen also scored for the Bruins (16-3-5), who have won four straight.

Bruins backup Jaroslav Halak made 36 saves and improved to 6-0-0 against Carey Price, his former teammate in Montreal.

Blackhawks 3, Stars 0: Corey Crawford made 32 saves for his team's first shutout this season and host Chicago ended Dallas' seven-game winning streak.

Brandon Saad, Patrick Kane and Connor Murphy scored for Chicago, which snapped a three-game slide.

The 34-year-old Crawford was sharp in stopping several prime Dallas chances in his 26th career shutout.



FRANK FRANKLIN II/AP

Wild goaltender Kaapo Kahkonen defends his net during the second period against the Devils on Tuesday night in Newark, N.J. Kahkonen made 32 saves in his NHL debut.

NHL scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Boston	24	15	3	2	37	91	61
Florida	24	14	4	2	35	88	68
Montreal	24	11	8	5	27	81	83
Tampa Bay	21	11	7	2	26	84	74
Buffalo	24	10	10	4	25	69	73
Utah	24	11	12	1	25	69	70
Dallas	24	11	12	3	23	69	66

Metropolitan Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Washington	25	16	4	2	34	91	75
N.Y. Islanders	25	15	5	2	33	82	64
Carolina	24	15	8	1	31	88	68
Pittsburgh	25	14	9	2	30	82	75
N.Y. Rangers	22	11	9	2	24	74	78
Columbus	23	11	11	2	23	74	78
New Jersey	23	8	11	4	20	59	62

Western Conference

Central Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
St. Louis	25	14	5	6	34	72	69
Dallas	26	15	9	2	34	72	62
Washington	24	15	8	1	31	88	68
Colorado	23	13	8	2	28	81	69
Nashville	23	11	9	2	25	81	78
Calgary	24	11	11	2	23	74	78
Minnesota	24	11	11	4	24	74	78
Edmonton	25	11	11	4	24	74	78

Pacific Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Arizona	25	14	8	3	31	71	58
Vancouver	25	12	9	4	28	71	51
Edmonton	25	11	11	2	27	71	57
Vegas	26	11	11	4	27	77	77
Calgary	27	11	12	4	26	67	63
Arizona	26	11	12	4	26	67	63
Los Angeles	24	9	13	2	20	62	63

Notes: Two points for a win, one point for an overtime win, one-half point in each division and two wins per conference advance to playoffs.

Minnesota 3, New Jersey 2: New Jersey 1, 3-1.

Chicago 3, Dallas 1: Chicago 1.

Carolina 3, New Jersey 1: Carolina 1, N.Y. Rangers 0.

Wednesday's games

St. Louis at New Jersey, 7 p.m.

Montreal at Florida, 7 p.m.

Philadelphia at Buffalo, 7 p.m.

Philadelphia at Columbus, 7 p.m.

Toronto at Detroit, 7 p.m.

Vegas at Nashville, 7 p.m.

Edmonton at Colorado, 7 p.m.

N.Y. Islanders at Los Angeles, 7 p.m.

Wednesday's games

New Jersey at Montreal, 7 p.m.

Carolina at N.Y. Rangers, 7 p.m.

Boston at Ottawa, 7 p.m.

Florida at Tampa Bay, 7 p.m.

Philadelphia at Pittsburgh, 7 p.m.

Toronto at Detroit, 7 p.m.

Los Angeles at San Jose, 7 p.m.

Colorado at Chicago, 7 p.m.

Tampa Bay at Washington, 7 p.m.

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COLLEGE BASKETBALL



MARCO GARCIA/AP

Georgia forward Rayshaun Hammonds, left, tries to stop Michigan State forward Xavier Tillman from getting to the basket during the first half of Tuesday's game at the Maui Invitational in Lahaina, Hawaii.

Roundup

Spartans back on track

No. 3 Michigan State bounces back, downs Georgia

Associated Press

LAHAINA, Hawaii — Cassius Winston sat in the Lahaina Civic Center locker room, the tears forming a puddle by his feet as his teammates warmed up on the court below.

It's been less than three weeks since his brother's death and Winston's pain is still searing, his heart still heavy.

Once the ball was in his hands, Winston felt a sense of normalcy, found a rhythm that had been missing since tragedy struck.

Even then, Georgia's Anthony Edwards nearly spoiled it.

Winston had 28 points and eight assists, and No. 3 Michigan State withstood Edwards' second-half outburst to beat Georgia 93-85 at the Maui Invitational on Tuesday.

"Once I got out there, I was able to find my rhythm, find my peace out there on the court and that was really good for me, get-

ting up and down, just having that rhythm that I usually play with," Winston said. "I feel like this is the first time I kind of had it in a while."

Michigan State (4-2) was sharp early after losing to Virginia Tech in its opener, building a 28-point lead early in the second half behind Winston's steady play.

Once Edwards got rolling, the Spartans had no answer.

Projected as a lottery pick, the 6-foot-5 freshman brought the Bulldogs (3-2) back almost entirely by himself, scoring 33 of his 37 points in the second half.

But Michigan State had Winston.

Spartans coach Tom Izzo called Winston a "shell toll of himself" after a quiet game against Virginia Tech.

Brother Zachary Winston was hit by a train and killed Nov. 9, a death that has taken an emotional and physical toll on the senior guard.

No. 4 Kansas 71, BYU 56: At Lahaina, Hawaii, David McCormack scored 16 points, Ochai Agbaji added 14 and the Jayhawks turned a huge second half into a trip to the Maui Invitational title game with a victory over the Cougars.

No. 18 Auburn 79, Richmond 65: At New York, Samir Doughty scored 22 points to lead the Tigers to a win over the Spiders in the championship game of the Legends Classic.

No. 21 Colorado 71, Clemson 67: At Las Vegas, Tyler Bey had 18 points and 11 rebounds to lead the Buffaloes over the Tigers in the championship game of the MGM Resorts Main Event.

Navy 72, Cornell 61: John Carter Jr. and Cam Davis scored 24 points apiece as the host Midshipmen defeated the Big Red.

Greg Summers had 12 points and 12 rebounds for Navy (3-3), which led 42-29 at halftime.

Fall: Lumberjacks force Devils into 22 turnovers

FROM BACK PAGE

the length of the floor for a buzzer-beating layup with Duke forward Jack White in futile pursuit.

"I looked up at the clock and saw I had 2.6 seconds, just going as fast as I can to lay it up. Like a layup drill. Prayed it would go in," Bain said. "I wasn't sure if the guy was going to foul me or not. Get it on the rim to give us a chance."

Kevin Harris scored 26 points and Kensmil added 15 for the Lumberjacks (5-1).

"It means the world," Harris said.

Vernon Carey had 20 points and 11 rebounds for the Blue Devils (6-1), who committed 22 turnovers and shot just 11-for-24 from the free-throw line in the second half.

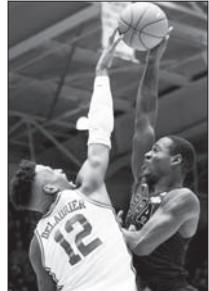
Duke coach Mike Krzyzewski "told us at halftime about getting back," on defense, guard Cassius Stanley said. "It's kind of what we deserved. We didn't listen to him, and it hurt us eventually at the end."

Jones had 17 points and 12 assists — but also eight turnovers against a Stephen F. Austin defense that is the nation's best at generating takeaways.

The Lumberjacks, who entered at No. 26 in Ken Pomeroy's efficiency rankings, led Division I by forcing 25.8 turnovers per game — a huge challenge, it turned out, for a young Duke team that started four freshmen and a sophomore and has had issues taking care of the ball.

"Deny the ball, pressure teams, turn them over," Bain said. "People don't like pressure. Everyone wants to be comfortable, be able to see the floor. It's a winning formula — you deny passes, you pressure the ball, make people play 1-on-1, and that's hard. You can't do that for 40 minutes. You have to have some great lungs."

There were two ties and a lead change in the final minute of regulation, with Kensmil tying it at 81 on his layup with 19 seconds remaining. That left Duke with the last shot before OT, but after Jones missed a turnaround jumper with about four seconds left, the rebound was batted around to Stanley, whose jumper



GERRY BROOME/AP

Duke forward Javin DeLaurier, left, blocks Stephen F. Austin guard Cameron Johnson during Tuesday's game in Durham, N.C.

off the glass went off the rim at the buzzer.

Big picture

Stephen F. Austin: No question the Lumberjacks earned the biggest victory in program history. Bain, a fifth-year senior, was a freshman on the Thomas Walkup-led team that upset eighth-ranked West Virginia as a No. 14 seed in the first round of the 2016 NCAA Tournament.

"It doesn't get much bigger than this," Bain said. "But getting a win inside the NCAA Tournament, that's a different type of sweet. That's a different type of taste you want have. We didn't get that last year."

Duke: This Duke team didn't have the feeling of invincibility that some of its predecessors had, in part because it committed at least 16 turnovers in three of its first six games. The Blue Devils' offense was completely flummoxed at times by the Lumberjacks' unrelenting pressure, and as a result, their run at No. 1 will end after two weeks. For the second straight season, they lost at home to an unranked opponent as the No. 1 team, with the Zion Williamson-led squad falling to Syracuse.

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COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Ohio State jumps over LSU to No. 1

Rivalry weekend could alter playoffs rankings

By RALPH D. RUSSO
Associated Press

Ohio State jumped LSU to No. 1 in the College Football Playoff rankings with two weeks left to go before selection Sunday.

LSU slipped to second Tuesday night and Clemson remained third while Georgia held on at four. If playoff history holds form, three of those top four teams will reach the semifinals.

Alabama remained No. 5 in the selection committee's third rankings, with Utah moving up a spot to No. 6. The Utes are the only Pac-12 team in the top 10 after Oregon dropped eight spots to 14th.

Oklahoma is seventh, followed by Minnesota, Baylor and Penn State.

In each of the first five years of the playoff, three of the top four teams in the rankings heading into rivalry weekend reached the semifinals, including the No. 1 team every time.

Now that spot belongs to Ohio State, which committee chairman Ron Mullen has continual referred to as a complete team.

"Competing consistently and really highly ranked on offense and defense. Performing at a high level on both," Mullen said of Ohio State, which currently leads the nation in scoring and points allowed.

The Buckeyes beat Penn State last week 28-17, their third victory of the season against a team currently ranked along with No. 12 Wisconsin and No. 18 Cincinnati. LSU has beaten No. 5 Alabama, No. 11 Florida and No. 15 Auburn.

Down the stretch

There are some signs that the stretch run this season could be more volatile than in past playoff years. First off, three times in the previous five years one of the teams that was ranked in the top four heading into rivalry weekend and made the playoff only played one game.

In 2015, Oklahoma reached the CFP as the Big 12 champion, but the conference had no title game so the Sooners were able to kick back with their 11-1 record after beating rival Oklahoma State.

In 2016, Ohio State was shut out of the Big Ten championship game because of a loss to Penn State, but the committee liked the Buckeyes' 11-1 record with three victories against top-10 teams.

Last year Notre Dame, a football independent, was No. 3 when it wrapped up its perfect regular season on rivalry weekend and stayed that way on selection Sunday.

In 2017, Alabama lost on rivalry weekend to Auburn as No. 1 in the CFP rankings. That eliminated the 11-1 Tide from the SEC cham-

CFP rankings

Nov. 26 Record

1. Ohio State	11-0
2. LSU	11-0
3. Clemson	10-1
4. Georgia	10-1
5. Alabama	10-1
6. Utah	10-1
7. Oklahoma	10-1
8. Minnesota	10-1
9. Baylor	10-1
10. Washington	9-2
11. Florida	9-2
12. Wisconsin	9-2
13. Michigan	9-2
14. Oregon	9-2
15. Auburn	8-3
16. Notre Dame	9-2
17. Michigan State	8-3
18. Memphis	10-1
19. Cincinnati	10-1
20. Wisconsin Badgers	10-1
21. Oklahoma State	8-3
22. Southern Cal	8-4
23. Mississippi State	8-3
24. Virginia Tech	8-3
25. Appalachian State	10-1

The playoff semifinals match the No. 1 team in the Big 12 and No. 2 will face No. 3. The semifinals will be hosted at the Paul Brown and Field B on Dec. 28. The championship game will be played on Jan. 13, 2020 at New Orleans.

ampionship game and dropped them to No. 5 in the second-to-last CFP rankings. Alabama moved back to four after sitting out championship weekend when No. 4 and unbeaten Wisconsin lost the Big Ten championship game to an Ohio State team with two losses.

The other contenders and what they need to happen over the next two weeks:

Alabama

- Beat the stuffing out of Auburn on the road with backup quarterback Mac Jones.
- LSU wins out.
- Hope winning the best loss outweighs a light résumé and no conference title.
- Some cannibalization in the Big 12 and Pac-12 over the next two weeks would also help — a lot.

Utah

- Win out in impressive fashion.
- LSU and Ohio State win out and eliminate other contenders.
- Hope the Pac-12 title gives it an edge over a Tua-less Alabama.
- Hope a pile of blowout victories is more impressive to the committee than the close calls the Big 12 champion will have.

Oklahoma and Baylor

- Similar to Utah in that either potential Big 12 champ could use the SEC and Big Ten victories to take care of business.
- A slip-up by Utah (or Alabama).

Minnesota

- The Gophers probably just need to win out and slap down a résumé in front of the committee that includes a Big Ten championship with victories against Penn State, Wisconsin and Ohio State.
- It probably wouldn't hurt if LSU cleared out Georgia, too.



TED S. WARREN/AP

Washington State quarterback Anthony Gordon looks for a receiver during the second half last Saturday. He needs just 80 yards passing to post the 16th 5,000-yard passing season in FBS history.

QBs grab attention in Apple Cup

By TIM BOOTH
Associated Press

SEATTLE — While he's tried to avoid getting wrapped up in the outside conversation, Jacob Eason knows it's there.

Washington's quarterback has chosen not to engage as much as he can even if the questions don't stop coming about his future.

"The Twitter, the Instagram, the radio, all that stuff. I know it's out there. I don't pay attention to it," Eason said. "I've got people asking me questions all the time. What do you think about this? I still don't want to respond to all those questions because there's so many of them."

Yet the speculation about whether Eason will be returning to Washington for his senior season will be in the spotlight Friday when the Huskies (6-5, 3-5 Pac-12) host Washington State (6-5, 3-5) in the Apple Cup, the 112th meeting between the schools.

He won't be the only quarterback on the field deserving of attention.

While other QBs have dominated the Pac-12 headlines, it's Washington State's Anthony Gordon who has rewritten the conference record book this season. Gordon leads the country in passing yards, passing attempts and touchdowns. He's completed 126 more passes than any other QB in the country. He set the Pac-12 single-season record for TD passes in last week's wild 54-53 win over Oregon State as his six TD tosses gave him 45 for the season. He needs just 80 yards passing to post the 16th 5,000-yard passing season in FBS history.

Gordon's legacy won't necessarily be the same as that of predecessors such as Luke Falk or Gardner Minshew, but he did extend Washington State's run on consecutive bowls to five.

"I came in with (Gordon) and to see him progress as a quarterback has been amazing," Washington State linebacker Jahad Woods said. "However many years ago, I never would have thought he'd be doing what he is doing."

Gordon will be playing in his only Apple Cup. The senior waited patiently over the years for his chance to get on the field and he now has an opportunity to end Washington State's six-game losing streak to its rival. When Gage Gubrud transferred from FCS powerhouse Eastern Washington to join the Cougars before this season, it seemed likely he would take over for Minshew.

But Gordon was the clear winner of the QB competition and he has backed up coach Mike Leach's decision. With a big game against Washington and in a bowl game, Gordon could come close to B.J. Szymanski's record of 5,833 yards passing in 2003.

"The individual rewards aren't all that important to me, to be honest, but reflecting on it a little bit, it kind of goes to show if you keep your head down and work hard, anything's possible," Gordon said after the Oregon State win. "My situation looked kind of



DAVID ZALUBOWSKI/AP

Washington quarterback Jacob Eason prepares to hand off on Saturday against Colorado. Eason has chosen not to engage as much as he can even if the questions don't stop coming about his future.

dark at the beginning, but I kept my head down, kept working, and it just goes to show what you can do if you work hard."

For his part, Eason has given no indications about his future. He's been projected as an NFL quarterback since he first arrived at Georgia and won the starting job as a freshman before transferring to Washington after his sophomore season.

"I haven't thought about anything right now ... just taking it one day at a time," Eason said.

If Eason had had a more dominant season, his decision might have been more straightforward. His first year playing in Washington's system has been rocky. Some moments have been great, like his performance against BYU in September. Some moments have been forgettable, like the costly pick-six he threw against Utah in a five-point loss to the Utes. At times, Eason has looked the part of an NFL-ready QB. At other times, it has seemed clear another year of college would be beneficial.

"I'm just really proud of just the way this team has responded. Obviously, we've had some adversity and guys come out every day and work hard and believe in what the coaches are coaching and we believe in each other, and we always got our back," Eason said. "Some games we don't play our best, but we're going to go right back to practice on Sunday and fix that and bounce back next week. I'm more proud of this team than anything I've done. The guys that bought in all season long and continued to play hard."

NFL



CHARLES REX ARBOGAST/AP

Bears wide receiver Allen Robinson, right, celebrates his touchdown with Jesper Horsted during the second half Sunday against the New York Giants in Chicago. Horsted played wide receiver at Princeton and was an undrafted free agent this year, before converting to tight end.

Injuries leave Bears with thin receiving group for Trubisky

BY GENE CHAMBERLAIN
Associated Press

LAKE FOREST, Ill. — It's been difficult for Chicago Bears quarterback Mitchell Trubisky to get the offense moving this season, even under normal circumstances.

This week's challenge looks all the greater and only part of it has to do with a shorter work week while playing a Thursday game against the Detroit Lions on Thanksgiving.

Trubisky will be trying to deal with an attack further diminished by injuries at tight end and wide receiver.

Starting wide receiver Taylor Gabriel and tight end Ben Braunecker are likely to miss the game because of concussions. Coach Matt Nagy on Tuesday said it's unlikely either could be ready for the game.

"Injuries are one of those things, you've just got to deal with it," Trubisky said.

Tight end Trey Burton is on injured reserve (calf) and tight end Adam Shaheen is out with a foot injury. Braunecker and Gabriel made TD catches in the Bears' 20-13 win on Nov. 10 over the Lions.

So the Bears will be relying heavily on their fourth and fifth tight ends in J.P. Holtz and recent practice squad call-up Jesper Horsted. They could also have wide receiver Riley Ridley active for the first time, as well.

"I mean, they've been around in training camp and stuff so we've got a good chemistry with those guys," Trubisky said. "But



Chicago Bears (5-6)
at Detroit Lions (3-7)
AFN-Sports
6:30 p.m. Thursday CET
2:30 a.m. Friday JKT

it's got to be an exciting opportunity for those guys to step up and see their first action."

Horsted played wide receiver at Princeton and was an undrafted free agent this year, before converting to tight end. In a brief debut last week, he made a 4-yard reception.

"It's like different body positions, so starting in that three-point stance is different for running routes and for blocking," Horsted. "I would say also it's all just kind of new."

"So it takes time both to get adjusted to it and to learn what's good and what's bad in the position."

Ridley was drafted in the fourth round and has been on the active roster all season without suiting up on game day, but Nagy said the former Georgia standout has been patient.

"It's hard, these kids come from these big programs that are successful, the big fish in the small pond and it kind of flips on them, but he's been a true pro," Nagy said. "He's trying to learn every

day after practice. He takes advice, very patient."

"I know it's killing him, because he wants to be out there. With Taylor here up in the air, we'll see what kind of chance this gives Riley."

Even when the Bears were at full strength, their offense struggled.

They're ranked 29th on offense and haven't been higher than that since after the season opener, when they were 28th. The passing attack is 30th and hasn't been better than 28th since Week 1.

Now they've fallen into a rut of scoring little or nothing in the first half of games.

Then in each of the past five games, they've come out of the locker room at halftime with touchdown drives.

Nagy said he can't explain why they fail to start the first half like the second half but does like the second-half starts.

"What I take from that is when things aren't going well our guys aren't just folding up shop," Nagy said. "They're understanding, let's make some corrections and let's get better."

"But that's probably our No. 1 objective right now. Let's come into these games with a faster start and let's see what happens when we do that."

It's possible playing only four days after their most recent game helps solve the problem.

"Obviously playing a team in our division that we are familiar with, hopefully that helps us get off to the faster start," Trubisky said.

Steelers to start rookie QB Hodges against Browns

BY WILL GRAVES
Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Devlin Hodges in. Mason Rudolph out.

At least for now.

Pittsburgh Steelers coach Mike Tomlin tabbed Hodges as the starting quarterback for Sunday's pivotal meeting with Cleveland at Heinz Field, though Tomlin cautioned against reading too much into the move.

"We're singularly focused on winning this game, of putting ourselves in position to win this game," Tomlin said Tuesday. "That's where the decision lies. We'll see where we are after this game. Really, we have no intended plans beyond this one."

Given the chaotic nature of the position this season for the Steelers (6-5), that's probably wise.

Hodges came on in relief of an ineffective Rudolph in the second half against Cincinnati, throwing for a momentum-shifting 79-yard touchdown pass to James Washington on his third snap that gave Pittsburgh the lead for good.

The undrafted rookie free agent who goes by the nickname "Duck" as a nod to his status as a champion duck caller back home in Alabama, was so-so otherwise — finishing 5-for-11 for 118 yards and the score — but he avoided mistakes and provided an emotional jolt that helped the Steelers stay in the AFC playoff race.

"He took care of the ball and provided a spark," Tomlin said. "So we just thought it was reasonable as we prepare this week to allow him to continue to do that. It means nothing about our intended plans for the foreseeable future or the trajectory of Mason's career or what have you."

Rudolph took over in Week 2 when Ben Roethlisberger was lost for the season because of a right elbow injury and became just the eighth player since 1970 to throw at least one touchdown in his first eight career appearances but has stumbled in recent weeks. He threw four interceptions in an ugly loss to Cleveland on Nov. 14 — a game that ended with Rudolph getting into a now infamous fight with Browns defensive end Myles Garrett that ended with Garrett hitting Rudolph in the head with the quarterback's own helmet — and tossed another pick at the goal line in Cincinnati in the first half that ended a scoring threat.

After the Steelers went three-and-out to start the third quarter against the Bengals, Tomlin had seen enough, though he doesn't think the fallout from the brawl with the Browns — which included Rudolph refusing an allegation by Garrett that he used a racial slur — played a role in Rudolph's shaky performance.

"I thought he was ready to go," Tomlin said. "I thought he had a good week. I thought he was focused. But those are just my interpretations."

Tomlin added the fact the Steelers were facing Cleveland instead of another opponent played no role in Rudolph's benching.

"We've got enough issues of our own that we just need to focus on us," Tomlin said.

Maybe, but starting Hodges over Rudolph removes a potentially combustible element from a rivalry that no longer feels dominant or one-sided.

Garrett is out for at least the rest of the season after being suspended indefinitely for slugging Rudolph. Rudolph, who was fined \$50,000 but avoided further discipline, found himself the focal point of the ensuing firestorm. Cleveland fans used a Browns helmet to smash a piñata made in Rudolph's likeness before last week's victory over Miami and Cleveland defensive end Sheldon Richardson said he hoped Rudolph would get the nod in the rematch.

"You see him last game?" Richardson said.

While saying the Steelers love being in "hot-button games," Tomlin isn't concerned about things getting out of hand as they did in the final seconds in Cleveland.

"We're playing and playing to win," Tomlin said. "And part of playing to win is playing hard and smart and not beating yourselves. We're going to paint inside those white lines I promise you."

And Hodges will get an unlikely second chance to hold the brush. But at the end of training camp after getting caught in a numbers game, Hodges returned to Pittsburgh after the Steelers traded third-stringer Josh Dobbs to Jacksonville in mid-September. He played capably while filling in for Rudolph — who watched from the sideline while dealing with a concussion — against the Los Angeles Chargers on Oct. 13, completing 15 of 20 passes for 132 yards with a touchdown and an interception.

Tomlin pointed out that Hodges "has not killed us" when he's played. Given Pittsburgh's defense, which ranks second in the league in takeaways and third in sacks, a caretaker under center may be all that's required for the Steelers to remain in the playoff picture. It's an aspect of the job Rudolph struggled with recently. Now it's Hodges' turn to see if he can continue his improbable rise from "camp arm" to NFL starting quarterback.

NFL



RUSTY COSTANZA/AP

Saints wide receiver Michael Thomas, right, picks up yardage after a pass reception in front of Atlanta Falcons linebacker Deion Jones on Nov. 10 in New Orleans. Thomas could break the NFL record for receptions in a season, even though he was without quarterback Drew Brees for more than a month.

Return on investment

Saints' Thomas earning \$100 million contract

By BRETT MARTEL
Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS When Michael Thomas appears in the locker room at New Orleans Saints training headquarters, he doesn't linger long.

The 6-foot-3, 212-pound Thomas is as often seen striding somewhere with purpose, be it for muscle maintenance in the training room or to study opposing defenses in meeting rooms.

The way he celebrates clutch catches with bulging biceps flexed on each side of his head indicates how much time he spends in the weight room, building the strength that makes it difficult for defenders to establish inside position on New Orleans' No. 1 receiver, or get between him and a passing route.

His 521 catches for 3,787 yards and 23 touchdowns in his first three seasons out of Ohio State earned him a five-year extension worth nearly \$100 million.

Thomas pledged to "earn every penny," and has since produced what could be one of the greatest seasons by a receiver in NFL history.

"I'm blessed to be in a position to have an opportunity to earn a contract like that, so I just want to take full advantage of it and give my best effort and add the most value I can," Thomas said. "How can I build and how can I get better? And how can I do better than the week before? I'm always trying to play a perfect game. I haven't played one yet."

He doesn't seem far off.

His 104 receptions are the most ever through the first 11 games of



New Orleans Saints (9-2)
at Atlanta Falcons (3-8)
AFN-Sports
2:15 a.m. Friday CET
10:15 a.m. Friday JKT

a season, putting him on pace to eclipse Marvin Harrison's single-season record of 143 receptions in 2002. That's also 23 catches ahead of Houston's DeAndre Hopkins, who ranks second.

Thomas has produced while playing with two different quarterbacks this season: Drew Brees and backup Teddy Bridgewater, who started five games when Brees was sidelined by a thumb injury.

Thomas even thrived when defenses knew he'd be a focal point of the Saints' offense, because of sporadic injuries to other key defensive players — from dynamic running back Alvin Kamara to tight end Jared Cook.

Thomas said when he knew he was going to be the focal point of opposing defenses, his approach was to "accept the challenge and don't think it's the end of the world."

"I don't want to make any excuses about what (scheme) they're playing or they did this or they did that," Thomas continued. "Whatever my coach is asking me to do, if they need me to make a play, matter how many people

are on me, I'm going to make the play."

Of the 408 passes the Saints have attempted this season, 124, or 30 percent, have been intended for Thomas, and he's caught 84 percent of those.

As far as drawing coverage from opponents' top defensive backs, Thomas states flatly, "I'm not really worried about the names on the jerseys or who's following me. If I look up and you're in front of me, I'm about to beat you. That's it."

The numbers back him up. He's made 10 receptions and 100 yards in a game look routine.

In last Sunday's 34-31 victory over Carolina, he had 10 catches for 101 yards and a touchdown, making him the first player in Saints history with five straight 100-yard receiving games. The Panthers couldn't contain him during the Saints' game-winning drive inside the final two minutes, when Thomas caught passes of 14 yards on second-and-16 and 24 yards on third-and-6.

On Nov. 10, when the Atlanta Falcons sacked Brees six times and held the Saints without a touchdown in a 26-9 victory in New Orleans, they still had trouble containing Thomas, who had 13 catches for 152 yards.

The Falcons' secondary will try again when Atlanta hosts New Orleans on Thursday night.

Atlanta safety Ricardo Allen said a main challenge of defending Thomas is "how big he is and his catch radius," adding that Thomas is "going to go out there and fight. He's a competitor."

AP sports writer Charles Odum in Flowery Branch, Ga., contributed to this report.

Weekly statistics

AFC individual leaders

Week 12		Quarterbacks		Rushers		Receivers		Punters		Rushers	
At	Com	Att	Com	Yds	Avg	LG	TD	Yds	Avg	LG	TD
Rivers, LAC	416	268	3169	15	14	21	0	398	266	3433	21
Brees, NO	439	271	2899	20	9	25	0	423	339	3595	22
Watson, HOU	249	149	2889	19	7	24	0	410	237	2937	24
Mahomes, KC	323	212	2808	19	2	24	0	591	219	3047	11
Mayfield, CLE	375	226	2778	14	13	23	0	397	266	2934	18
Brady, NE	317	201	2521	14	13	23	0	380	219	2918	28
L. Jackson, BAL	299	200	2427	24	5	24	0	326	276	2756	21
Josh Allen, BUF	342	206	2360	15	8	24	0	337	232	2731	20
Mishnick, JAC	290	176	2254	14	8	24	0	303	207	2703	14
Daktron, CIN	338	204	2252	9	8	24	0	384	243	2500	17

Week 12		Quarterbacks		Rushers		Receivers		Punters		Rushers	
At	Com	Att	Com	Yds	Avg	LG	TD	Yds	Avg	LG	TD
Prescott, DAL	211	117	208	10	8	84	0	214	107	48	14
McDaniels, TAM	251	147	207	7	7	21	0	215	919	4.3	27
Goff, LAR	251	147	207	7	7	21	0	208	919	4.3	27
Ryan, ATL	235	126	207	6	6	21	0	441	62	47	28
Jones, GBY	280	153	207	6	6	21	0	395	147	41	25
Garoppolo, SAN	337	232	2731	20	10	24	0	315	54	803	1
K. Murray, ARI	337	232	2731	20	10	24	0	315	46	30	1
Wentz, PHI	384	243	2500	17	6	24	0	315	52	441	17

Week 12		Quarterbacks		Rushers		Receivers		Punters		Rushers	
At	Com	Att	Com	Yds	Avg	LG	TD	Yds	Avg	LG	TD
McCaffrey, CAR	222	117	50	891	10	24	0	204	101	47	14
D. Henry, TEN	206	91	48	741	14	24	0	214	107	48	14
J. Jacobs, OAK	206	97	48	51	103	24	0	215	919	4.3	27
Fitzpatrick, CLE	206	96	48	51	103	24	0	208	919	4.3	27
L. Jackson, BAL	124	876	71	476	6	21	0	441	62	47	28
M. Mack, IND	192	862	45	631	4	21	0	395	147	41	25
M. Hyatt, IND	192	862	45	631	4	21	0	395	147	41	25
M. Ingram, BAL	151	578	52	53	9	21	0	384	121	58	13
Lindsay, NE	147	708	48	40	5	21	0	384	121	58	13
Michel, NE	147	700	34	34	26	6	0	384	121	58	13

Week 12		Quarterbacks		Rushers		Receivers		Punters		Rushers	
At	Com	Att	Com	Yds	Avg	LG	TD	Yds	Avg	LG	TD
Long, LAC	32	1526	60	47	7	21	0	22	11	50	14
Colquitt, LAC	57	2333	70	47	2	21	0	22	11	50	14
L. Edwards, NYJ	63	2924	63	46	4	21	0	22	11	50	14
Gillan, CLE	47	2176	71	46	3	21	0	22	11	50	14
McCarron, CLE	54	2473	61	45	4	21	0	22	11	50	14
Haack, MIA	52	2374	62	45	4	21	0	22	11	50	14
Sanchez, MIA	52	2783	65	44	5	21	0	22	11	50	14
Bayless, MIA	17	68	4	40	1	21	0	22	11	50	14

Week 12		Quarterbacks		Rushers		Receivers		Punters		Rushers	
At	Com	Att	Com	Yds	Avg	LG	TD	Yds	Avg	LG	TD
Berrios, NYJ	151	101	70	26	0	0	0	22	11	50	14
Rogers, IND	14	93	21	83	2	21	0	22	11	50	14
Cartwright, IND	14	147	70	26	2	21	0	22	11	50	14
Olszakowski, NE	20	9	0	22	0	0	0	22	11	50	14
Spencer, IND	21	172	82	42	2	21	0	22	11	50	14
A. Roberts, BUF	24	172	72	51	2	21	0	22	11	50	14
Garrett, IND	16	21	16	21	1	21	0	22	11	50	14
Long, IND	16	96	6	68	1	21	0	22	11	50	14
Westbrook, JAC	16	68	4	40	1	21	0	22	11	50	14

Week 12		Quarterbacks		Rushers		Receivers		Punters		Rushers	
At	Com	Att	Com	Yds	Avg	LG	TD	Yds	Avg	LG	TD
Patton, CHI	14	101	70	26	0	0	0	22	11	50	14
Agnew, DET	27	143	70	26	0	0	0	22	11	50	14
Smith, WAS	26	666	25	101	32	0	0	22	11	50	14
M. Sanders, PHI	314	224	67	0	0	0	0	22	11	50	14

Week 12		Quarterbacks		Rushers		Receivers		Punters		Rushers	
At	Com	Att	Com	Yds	Avg	LG	TD	Yds	Avg	LG	TD
Gonzalez, CAR	14	11	3	74	53	0	0	22	11	50	14
D. Cook, MIN	11	11	0	0	0	0	0	22	11	50	14
McDaniels, CAR	9	9	0	0	0	0	0	22	11	50	14
E. Elliott, DAL	8	7	0	0	0	0	0	22	11	50	14
Golladay, DET	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	22	11	50	14
Freeman, ATL	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	22	11	50	14
Stephens, CAR	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	22	11	50	14
McCarron, CAR	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	22	11	50	14
Long, LAC	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	22	11	50	14
Colquitt, LAC	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	22	11	50	14
Bayless, MIA	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	22	11	50	14
Garrett, MIA	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	22	11	50	14
Long, IND	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	22	11	50	14
Westbrook, JAC	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	22	11	50	14
Cartwright, IND	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	22	11		

NFL



ELISE AMENDOLA/AP

New England's Matthew Slater (18) blocks a punt by the Cowboys' Chris Jones during the first half on Sunday in Foxborough, Mass. Dallas owner Jerry Jones specifically mentioned special teams in his post-game comments about the Cowboys not performing against the Patriots.

Analysis

Short week gives Cowboys reprieve from talk of failure

By SCHUYLER DIXON
Associated Press

FRISCO, Texas — The annual short week of Thanksgiving gives the Dallas Cowboys more than just a way to keep from stewing too long over yet another loss that illustrated they don't seem capable of the long playoff run owner Jerry Jones badly craves.

The quick turnaround to face Buffalo on Thursday gives the coaching staff a reprieve because a change with a little time to prepare doesn't make much sense — even after Jones blasted the coaching staff following a rain-soaked 13-9 loss to New England.

The Cowboys (6-5) still lead the NFC East with a clear path to their fourth postseason berth since 2014 under coach Jason Garrett. But simply making the playoffs probably isn't going to be enough to get Garrett another contract following the final season of his current one.

And therein lies the problem for Dallas, because it has yet to beat a winning team and has losses to four division leaders (that includes Green Bay and Minnesota, tied atop the NFC North).

In other words, Dallas can handle teams that won't be in the playoffs. But the Cowboys can't come through against the teams that will stand between them and their first trip to the NFC championship game since the last of their five Super Bowl titles to finish the 1995 season.

"Fortunately, in some way, we still control our destiny," quarterback Dak Prescott said. "We've

just got to figure it out and beat some of these good teams to put ourselves in position to make it to that tournament and to be able to beat those teams then."

While suggesting that there was no shame in getting out-coached by six-time title-winner Bill Belichick, Jones pinned poor special teams play squarely on coaching. He didn't name special teams coordinator Keith O'Quinn, a veteran Dallas staffer promoted to that spot last year.

The game's only touchdown came on a 12-yard drive after a blocked punt, and the Cowboys repeatedly cost themselves field position with bad decisions or penalties in the kicking game.

Jones wouldn't second-guess the most notable kicking decision: Garrett settling for Dallas' third field goal when trailing by seven with six minutes remaining.

Hall of Fame quarterback Troy Aikman, a three-time Super Bowl winner for Cowboys, didn't hesitate to question it as the Fox television analyst.

"It's frustrating to be reminded of the fundamentals of football and coaching that beat us out there," Jones said. "There is no question (Belichick) put pressure on people returning the kicks and people handling the ball on special teams. There is no question that he used that to put some special emphasis on it. So, yeah, I'm frustrated."

What's working

The most impressive aspect against the Patriots was the rush-

ing attack with Ezekiel Elliott. Dallas probably should have used the two-time rushing champion more considering the conditions.

What needs help

A two-game stretch with seven forced turnovers is looking like a fluke for the Dallas defense. The loss to New England was the third straight game without one, when a takeaway might have been the best way to escape the miserable conditions with a victory.

Stock up

The solid work of the offensive line was magnified by a questionable tripping call against center Travis Frederick that wiped out a first-down completion with the Cowboys trying to drive to a potential winning touchdown in the final two minutes. Dallas turned it over on downs. Prescott wasn't sacked and has gone down 12 times this season, tied for fourth fewest in the NFL.

Stock down

Prescott's preparation. This isn't to suggest any change in his work during the week, which is repeatedly praised by coaches. But Prescott kind of blew off a question from reporters about the possibility of rain in New England, and didn't realize until a couple of series into the game that he needed a glove for better ball handling. He acknowledged after the game that playing without gloves early hurt the team.

Bills' Beasley not dwelling on past

Thanksgiving will be first trip back to Dallas

By MARK LUDWICZAK
Associated Press

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. — Ahead of his long-awaited return to Dallas, Cole Beasley is having too much fun with his new team to dwell on the past.

Beasley's Buffalo Bills (8-3) will head to Dallas to take on the Cowboys (6-5) on Thanksgiving. It will be Beasley's first game against his former team after spending the first seven years of his career in Dallas.

"I haven't really thought about it," Beasley said. "I've been happy here so I'm kind of focused more on what we've been doing here. There's no ill will or anything. I still think I made the right decision. It was the best move for me and I don't regret it one bit."

That's a different tone than the one Beasley struck earlier this offseason. The 30-year-old slot receiver was eager to move on from Dallas after speaking out about his lack of opportunities in the Cowboys offense. Beasley has been a featured performer for the upstart Bills with 49 receptions for 525 yards and four touchdowns and is on pace to have one of the best seasons of his career.

"It's all gone, I'm on a different team," Beasley said. "The role is different now. I'm in a role that I wanted to be in anywhere at that point in time when I was trying to decide where to go. It's been awesome. I'm getting to do exactly what I want to do here."

Beasley has quickly become a go-to guy for Buffalo both in the locker room and on the field. The 5-foot-8, 174-pound wideout has repeatedly impressed with his consistency and toughness, in addition to his leadership skills.

"The thing about Cole that I don't think really people give him credit for is his football IQ is extremely high," Bills quarterback Josh Allen said. "The things that he sees on the field, he's kind of like a quarterback out there. He sees things open before they are."

"Concepts that he likes that he's given to Coach Daboll we've incorporated into our offense and



Buffalo Bills (8-3)
at Dallas Cowboys (6-5)
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10:30 p.m. Thursday CET
6:30 a.m. Friday JKT

they're key, core plays for us. We appreciate him here and we appreciate how hard he works each day."

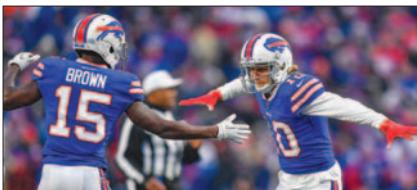
Beasley admits that a win over his former team would be special, but he's more concerned about what it could mean for Buffalo's postseason hopes. The Bills are coming off their two most complete performances of the season — wins over Miami and Denver — but are still looking for a signature win.

A victory over Dallas Thanksgiving would do just that while pushing the Bills closer in the wild-card race in the AFC.

"There's a part of you that wants to win it a little more, maybe, I guess, but I want to win them all," Beasley said. "So it's really not that much different. It will be fun to go against a lot of guys that I've gone and practiced against over the last few years, so it will be cool to do that. I won't be talking any, like, serious (stuff) to 'em but it will be some joking around, trash talking."

While Beasley prefers not to reflect on the past, it's clear that he's been rejuvenated by his role in Buffalo.

"I feel like maybe at that point in time in Dallas I would've thought, maybe, I don't know how many years I've got left, maybe I've got like one or two," Beasley said. "But now I'm here and I'm happy and I'm having a great time. Really, I'll play here 'til the wheels fall off. I love the guys, I love the coaches. (Brian) Daboll's one of the coolest coordinators I've ever had. So, it's been awesome."



ADRIAN KRAUS/AP

Bills wide receiver Cole Beasley, right, celebrates with wide receiver John Brown after scoring a touchdown against the Denver Broncos during the fourth quarter on Sunday in Orchard Park, N.Y.

SPORTS



CFP rankings

Ohio State leapfrogs LSU, takes over No. 1 position » **College football, Page 28**

COLLEGE BASKETBALL



PHOTOS BY GERRY BROOME/AP

Stephen F. Austin forward Nathan Bain, left, and guard David Kachelries celebrate Bain's game-winning basket against No. 1 Duke during overtime Tuesday in Durham, N.C.

Another 1 stunned

Duke is third top-ranked team to fall

By JOEY MCCREARY
Associated Press

DURHAM, N.C. — With a breakaway layup at the overtime buzzer, Stephen F. Austin pulled off a shocker for the ages and did what no team outside the ACC had done in almost 20 years — topple mighty Duke at home.

The underdog Lumberjacks and their high-pressure defense took over at Cameron Indoor Stadium as No. 1 Duke lost its grip on everything: The ball, the game, its prized home-court winning streak and, ultimately, the nation's top ranking.

Stephen F. Austin stunned the Blue Dev-

ils 85-83 in overtime Tuesday night, with Nathan Bain's coast-to-coast layup just before time expired bringing a jarring end to Duke's 150-game home winning streak against nonconference opponents.

Representing the little-known Southland Conference, the Lumberjacks became the first non-Atlantic Coast Conference school to beat Duke at Cameron since St. John's in February 2000, and the second unranked squad to upset a No. 1 team on its home floor in two weeks after Evansville went into Rupp Arena and knocked off Kentucky 67-64.

"I told our players, 'Banners can't beat

us tonight,'" Stephen F. Austin coach Kyle Keller said. "The players have to beat us."

Duke had the ball late in overtime, but Tre Jones missed a jumper with about 15 seconds left and Wendell Moore rebounded it for the Blue Devils. Hounded by the Lumberjacks' active defense, Jones threw a bounce pass toward the baseline that got broken up, and the ball kicked away from Matthew Hurt in a scramble with around three seconds to go.

Gavin Kennesil snatched it and passed from the seat of his pants to Bain, who split two Blue Devils players and went nearly

SEE FALL ON PAGE 27



Duke guard Cassius Stanley reacts after the Blue Devils' 150-game home winning streak against nonconference opponents came to an end with the 85-83 loss.

Clippers' winning streak reaches 6 games » NBA, Page 26



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